

## THE MISKITO KINGS AND THE LINE OF SUCCESSION

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*The Miskito Indians dominated eastern Nicaragua during the colonial and republican eras until 1894, when the region came under the control of the Nicaraguan nation. The major native figures of the Miskito Kingdom were the individuals who filled the position of "king." These Miskito kings have been portrayed in the literature as puppets of the English, put into and out of office at their whim. During historical research on the Miskito, a different picture of the kings emerged. A single line of succession has been pieced together, from 1655 to 1894, in which most kings were succeeded by the eldest son of their primary wife. In the few exceptional cases, the succession passed from older to younger brother. For at least the last 239 years of the kingdom, the kingship was controlled by a single family group.*

DURING THE COLONIAL ERA and the early republican period, the Miskito Indians were able to maintain their independence first from Spain, then from the Federation of Central American States, and finally, after 1848, from Nicaragua.<sup>1</sup> While the Miskito resisted the Spanish, they welcomed the English and generally considered themselves English citizens. During the seventeenth century, the Miskito aided English buccaneers. Later they aided the English logwood cutters of Belize. The English came to view the Miskito Shore as a convenient place to carve out a niche in the Spanish-held mainland of Central America. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Miskito were under the greatest English influence, as the English attempted to control the rights for a canal through Nicaragua by supporting Miskito claims to the east coast. Following the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, in 1850, English influence over the Miskito Shore diminished, and little by little the Miskito came under the control of the Nicaraguans.<sup>2</sup> The so-called reincorporation of the east coast occurred in 1894, a date marking the end of political autonomy for the Miskito but not the end of the Miskito as a recognizable ethnic group within the Nicaraguan population.

Today the Miskito represent a mixed Indian, black, and white population that inhabits the east coasts of Nicaragua and Honduras. In this century Chinese have also intermarried with the Miskito. Today the Miskito constitute a viable ethnic minority of perhaps as many as 150,000 individuals. The total Indian population of Nicaragua's Atlantic coast, including Miskito, Sumu, and Rama, is said to be approximately 185,000, of which the Miskito constitute a sizable majority (Macdonald 1981:9). Population growth in the past few decades has been rapid. During the period under discussion in this article, 1633 to 1908, the Miskito population probably never numbered more than 10,000 to 15,000 individuals.

### THE MISKITO KINGDOM

While many of the native kings of Mesoamerica were losing their authority as a result of Spanish conquest, a new political structure emerged on the east coast of Nicaragua that became known as the Miskito Kingdom. Many writers have suggested that this political entity was something purposely created by the English. This does not seem to be the case. Its origins seem rather to have been the Miskito Coast itself (Dennis and Olien n.d.), although it is probable that contact with the English,

and perhaps Africans as well, influenced the nature of the structure and the titles associated with it. It will be shown that the amount of influence by the English on the Miskito kings varied considerably from one time period to another, mainly due to the varying English interest in the area over time. In spite of greater or lesser English influence, the structure of the Miskito Kingdom remained remarkably stable for about 240 years. Although the leader of the Miskito was referred to as "king," suggesting a state level of organization, the Miskito Kingdom was perhaps more like a chiefdom emerging from a tribe involved in predatory expansion.

Anthropologists have generally taken the point of view that the kings played a minor role in Miskito society. For example, Eduard Conzemius (1932:101), the first modern anthropologist to study the Miskito and their neighbors, the Sumu, wrote that the king "became a tool in the hands of his foreign protectors, with whose aid his nominal authority was extended over the larger part of the coast." More recently, Mary W. Helms (1969:76-77) has suggested that the Miskito kings were primarily middlemen and that the status of king was only a technicality. In contrast, it will be shown here that the kings were important symbols of Miskito culture with considerable meaning for the natives.

In one of the earliest references to a Miskito king, an Englishman known only as M.W. described him as having little authority. The group he encountered in 1699 (1732:293) appears to have been a tribal-type organization at war:

They live peaceably together in several families, yet accounting all *Indians* of one tongue, to be the same people and friends, and are in quality all equal, neither king nor captains of families bearing any more command than the meanest, unless it be at such times when they make any expeditions against the *Alboawinneys*; at that time they submit to the conduct, and obey the orders of their kings and captains . . .

By at least the middle of the eighteenth century, the Miskito Kingdom had become organized around three leadership positions: the "general," the "king," and the "governor." An account written in 1757 (Hodgson 1822:46-47) states that the general controlled the northern part of the kingdom, the area west of Little Black River. The population under the general's control consisted of Indians and *zambos* (the offspring of Indians and shipwrecked and otherwise escaped African slaves). The king controlled the central part of the coast, an area that stretched from Little Black River to Bragman's Bluff. The population of this section of the coast was mostly *zambos*. The southern part of the kingdom was controlled by the governor, beginning at Bragman's Bluff and stretching to the south. The population of this area was Indian. Robert Hodgson (the Younger), who served as third superintendent of the Miskito Shore beginning in 1768, described the leaders as follows (1822:47):

The power of these three principal men (which is hereditary) is nearly equal; a small difference only being in favour of the king, . . . but none of these chiefs have much more than a negative voice; and never attempt any thing without a council of such old men as have influence among those of their countrymen who live around them. When any thing of importance is to be done, the people of consequence meet, and argue, each as he pleases, but are seldom unanimous, except when they think their country is immediately concerned.

Hodgson goes on to mention that lesser titles, those of admiral and captain, were bestowed on other Miskitos by the British superintendent.

By at least 1759, the king had assumed ascendancy over the others and another position was added to the political structure, that of admiral. The basic organization then included a king who controlled the entire kingdom, yet who also seems to

have continued to deal with the local problems of the central area. Under the king were three sub-leaders: the general, still controlling the northern area; the governor, still controlling the area adjacent to the central area of the king; and the admiral, controlling the southernmost area. Captain continued as a lesser title. The titles of admiral and general remain somewhat confusing in the ethnohistoric literature because there was one admiral and one general who were clearly the major leaders, while lesser leaders continued to take the titles of admiral and general as well. Beginning about 1800, the kingdom was divided into three subsections under the king, with the admiral replacing the king as leader of the central division. The ascendancy of the king over the other leaders suggests a transformation from a basically tribal organization, in which war leaders controlled three territories, into a chiefdom, with one individual clearly in authority over a hierarchy of political positions.

At least as early as 1687, the Miskito believed that in order for an individual to legitimize his claim as king, he must first be recognized as the group's leader by the English. Several of the kings actually went to England; others received commissions from the governor of Jamaica and later from the English representative in Belize. In addition, some of the princes were taken to England, Jamaica, or Belize to be educated. English became the prestige language of the coast (Holms 1978:328), and their followers expected the kings to become fairly fluent in the language.

Ever since Americans such as E.G. Squier began writing about the Miskito Indians, their kings have been portrayed as puppets of the English, kept in a state of intoxication and put into and pulled from office at the whim of the English. The cultural geographer James J. Parsons, who pioneered modern social science research in the western Caribbean, presents a somewhat typical view (1954:11) of the "preposterous, British-sponsored and protested [protected?] Miskito Kingdom (1860-1892) under a Royal House of barefoot zambos who were crowned and anointed in drunken orgies by the Superintendent of the Belize colony."<sup>3</sup>

The view of Miskito kings that will be presented here is quite different. It will be shown that from at least 1655, and perhaps earlier, an unbroken line of relatives maintained the line of royal succession. Most kings were related as father and son. Although E.G. Squier and other American writers promoted the idea that the English interfered with the succession and actually chose kings, in no case can this be demonstrated. The choice of king was entirely controlled by the Miskito, and in at least one case, that of George Augustus Frederic, it will be shown that the English preferred his brother Clarence, but were unable to keep George Augustus from becoming king.

A detailed discussion of the English involvement in or control of the politics of the Miskito Kingdom is beyond the scope of this article. However, it should be mentioned that the English had little, if any, interest in the organization or operation of the Miskito Kingdom. The Miskito controlled their internal affairs, at least until the Treaty of Managua (1860), which marked the demise of the kingdom. England's interests were almost exclusively economic. It is primarily in that realm that the English intervened in Miskito affairs.

The presentation that follows delineates the line of succession through an analysis of each king. It will be shown that from sometime before 1641 until 1894

there were, at the maximum, only two different lines of succession. From 1655 to 1894 it is clear that only one family group controlled the kingship. Prior to 1655, there was perhaps one other line of kings. This stability of succession is in marked contrast to E.G. Squier's stereotype of the Miskito kings as puppets of the English.

#### THE MISKITO KINGS

The first individuals to hold the title of king are not well known historically, as the beginnings of the Miskito Kingdom are semimythical. The first person of any real historical significance is an individual named Jeremy, who arrived in Jamaica in 1687 with an account of Miskito history that was recorded secondhand by Sir Hans Sloane, the governor of Jamaica's personal physician. According to Sloane (1707:1xxvi-1xxvii), he was told that Jeremy presented the following account of Miskito history:

The Memorial, and substance of what he, and the people with him, represented to the Duke of Albermarle; was, That in the Reign of King *Charles I.* of ever Blessed Memory, the Earl of *Warwick* (by virtue of Letters of Reprizal granted by his said Majesty for Damages received from the Subjects of this Catholick Majesty) did possess himself of several Islands in the *West-Indies*, particularly that of *Providence*, (since called by the *Spaniards St. Catalina*,) which is situate in 13 deg. 10 m. N<sup>o</sup> Lat. lying East from Cape *Gratias de Dios*, (vulgarly known by the name of *Muskitos*) between Thirty and Forty Leagues; which put the said Earl upon trying all ways and means of future Correspondence with the Natives of the said Cape and neighboring Country, and in some little time was so successful as to gain that Point, and farther prevail'd with them so far, as to persuade them to send home the King's Son, leaving one of his People as Hostage for him, which was Colonel *Morris*, now living at *New York*. The *Indian Prince* going home with the said Earl, staid in *England* three years, in which time the *Indian King* died, and the said Natives having in that time had intercourse of Friendship and Commerce with those of *Providence*, were soon made sensible of the Grandeur of his Majesty of *Great Britain*, and how necessary his Protection was to them. Upon the return of the said *Indian Prince*, they persuaded him to resign up his Authority and Power over them, and (with them) unanimously declare themselves the Subjects of his said Majesty of *Great Britain*, in which Opinion they have ever since persisted, and do own no other Supreme Command over them.

The important points of this account are that a king was already ruling the Miskito in the reign of England's King Charles I (1625-49) and that the Miskito king's son went to England for three years and then returned to become king himself (see Figure 1). Since the Spanish recaptured Providence Island in 1641, the Miskito king must have died prior to that date. Roughly ten years after his visit to Jamaica, Jeremy presented another account of Miskito history to the individual known only as M.W., who visited the Miskito Shore about 1699. Jeremy told M.W. that soon after the English conquest of Jamaica (1655), his father, Oldman, was taken to England and received a crown and commission from his brother, the king (M.W. 1732:288). Since Jeremy did not mention that the prince in the Sloane account was his father (or any other relative), it seems likely that Oldman and "the Prince" are not the same individuals. Therefore, the early kingship seems to have begun with an unnamed king, who was succeeded sometime before 1641 by his son (the prince who had gone to England). Sometime after 1655, Oldman became king of the Miskito, and he, too, went to England. There is no way of knowing whether Oldman was a descendant of the prince or not. Since several groups of Miskitos and zambos on the shore were apparently vying for power, and since Jeremy mentioned no

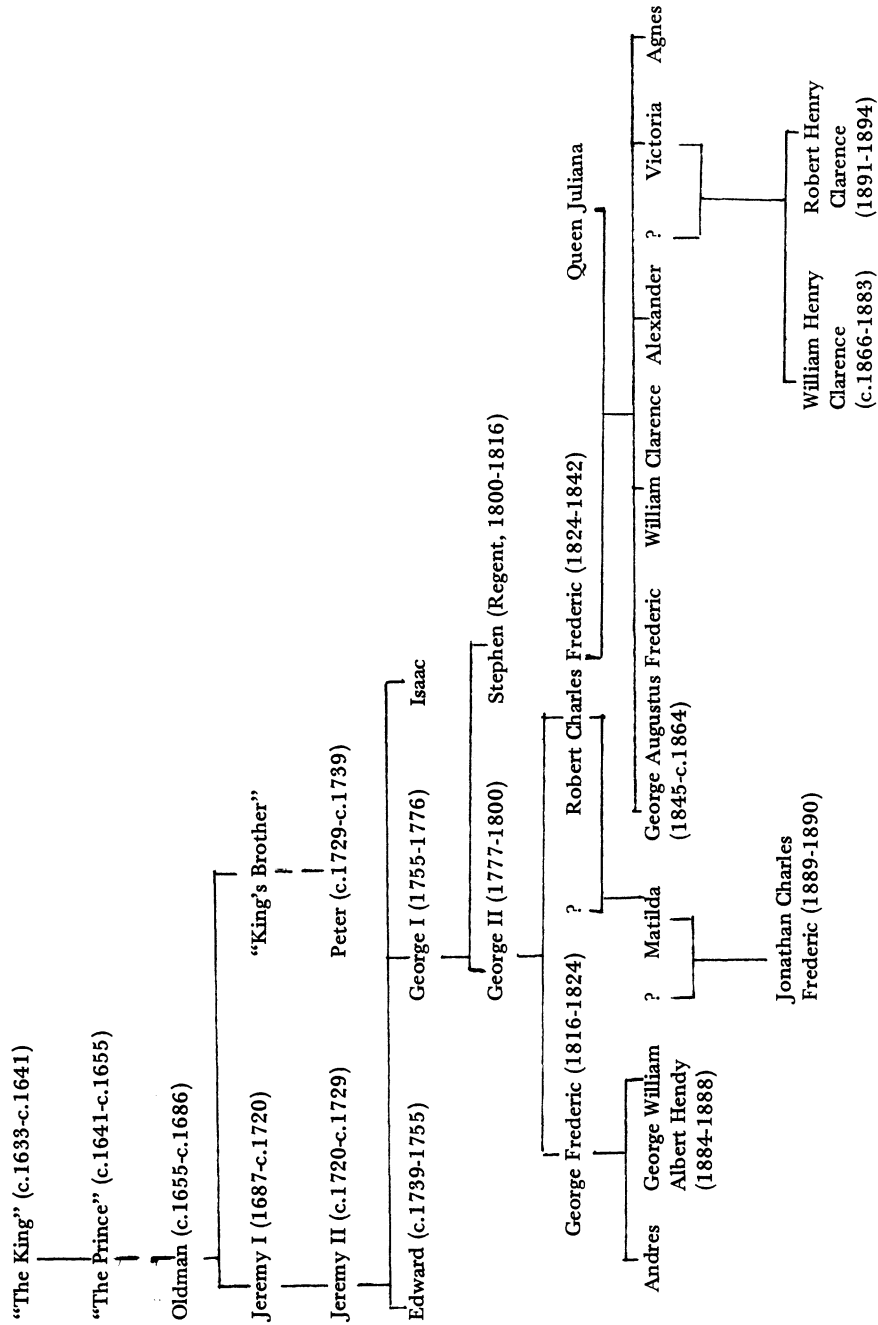


Figure 1. Line of Succession of Miskito Kings  
(Dates of reigns in parentheses; broken lines indicate unclear links)

connection between the prince and Oldman, it seems likely that Oldman represented the head of a new kin group that came to power at the expense of the kin group of the Prince. If a change in control occurred, it probably reflected an expansion of power of the zambos at the expense of the Indians. Captain Nathaniel Uring, an Englishman, was in the area in 1711 and was told by Indians living at Cape Camaron, near Black River, that they had fled there because (Uring 1928:154) "They said, that some People who were not of the ancient Inhabitants, but new Upstarts, were got into the Government, and behaved themselves with so much Pride and Insolence that they could not bear it." Uring goes on to describe the upstarts as the zambo descendants of shipwrecked blacks who intermarried with Miskito Indians, although he refers to them incorrectly as "mulattoes."

Between 1633 and 1641, the Providence Company settled Providence Island, off the east coast of Nicaragua, and began some sustained contact with the Miskito Indians (Anonymous 1899; Newton 1914). There is no mention of the father of the prince that went to England in any of the documents. However, we know something of the prince's visit to London. According to the historian W.S. Sorsby (1977:39, cited in Holms 1978:26), "The young prince was in London for three years, and was reportedly a great favorite of Charles I, 'from whom he met with the most gracious reception (and who) had him often with him on his private parties of pleasure, (and) admired his activity, strength, and many accomplishments.'"

Oldman, who apparently followed the prince as king, was given a crown and a commission by the king of England, probably Charles II. These items were in Jeremy's possession when M.W. visited the coast. M.W. (1732:288) writes that the crown was "but a lac'd hat" and the commission was "a ridiculous piece of writing, purporting, *That he should kindly use and relieve such straggl'g Englishmen as should chance to come that way, with plantains, fish, and turtle.*"

### *Jeremy I (1687-c.1720)*

Jeremy I is the first Miskito king described in the historical accounts. According to M.W. (1732:288),

This Mosquito king seems to be about 60 years old, is of a dark brown complexion, with somewhat of yellow, a little round-shoulder'd, which something shortens stature from six foot. He has a large rough visage, very long, his eyes large and staring, furrow'd deep in the cheeks, and round his very wide mouth. His black hair hangs long down upon his shoulders, his aspect somewhat terrible, and with a harsh voice like a bear. His limbs are very large and of a strong make; and his skin very rough and scabby. When he walks he turns inward on his toes, as most Indians do. Strangers always find him very good-natur'd, and officious to serve them, as I myself have experimented, when, having pass'd a great streight, I arrived at his house.

Jeremy lived near Sandy Bay, which is about thirty miles south of Cape Gracias a Dios. M.W. (1732:287) described Jeremy's family as well: "His court or family consists chiefly of himself, his two old sickly wives, his son and three daughters; two of which are very handsome, setting aside their nutmeg complexion, and their unbecoming gait." M.W. adds that there were about fifty more men, women, children, and a few "wild Indian" slaves living with the king.<sup>4</sup>

In the historical literature, Jeremy is most famous for his visit to the Jamaican governor, the duke of Albermarle, in 1687, mentioned earlier. In the words of Sir Hans Sloane (1707:1xxvi):



One King *Jeremy* came from the *Mosquitos* (an Indian People near the Provinces of *Nicaragua*, *Honduras*, and *Costa Rica*) he pretended to be a King there, and came from the others of his Country, to beg of the Duke of *Albermarle*, Governor of *Jamaica*, his Protection, and that he would send a Governour thither, with a power to War on the *Spaniards*, and *Pirats*. This he alleged to be due to his Country from the Crown of *England*, who had in the Reign of King *Charles I.* submitted itself to him. The Duke of *Albermarle* did nothing in this matter, being afraid it might be a trick of some people to set up a Government for *Bucaniers* or *Pirats*. This King *Jeremy*, in coming to Town, asking many questions about the Island, and not receiving as he thought, a satisfactory account, he pull'd off his *European* Cloaths his Friends had put on, and climb'd to the top of a Tree, to take a view of the Country.

*Jeremy* may have been using the visit to consolidate his power and legitimize his position. If he had been able to obtain the backing of England, it would certainly have enhanced his position vis-à-vis any competing leaders on the shore. The governor of Jamaica, in a letter to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, dated 11 February 1688 (Great Britain, Public Record Office 1899:493), wrote that:

Some Indians known by the name of "Musketa" Indians (whose country is called Cape Gracias de Dios, in latitude 15° 20' or thereabouts) have been here with me and have told me that they became subjects of King Charles I. and that they earnestly desired the King's protection or they must fall under the French or Dutch.

Since the Miskitos were threatened by neither the French nor the Dutch, it seems likely that *Jeremy* and his party wanted the king of England's protection to enhance their position on the coast. That *Jeremy's* position was not secure is reflected in the Spanish documents during his reign that refer to several other Miskito kings. In perhaps the most detailed report on the Miskito sent to Spain during *Jeremy's* reign, there is no mention whatsoever of him. Fray Benito Garret y Arlovi, bishop of Nicaragua, wrote to the king of Spain in 1711 asking for help in destroying the Miskito. In his letter he mentioned several other Miskito leaders (Garret y Arlovi, 1913:383): he described a petty king, named Guituné, fourteen leagues from Puntagorda, and a governor, named Piquirín, who lived at Puntagorda.

By 1721 some of the Miskito leaders were apparently trying to enhance their own positions through Spanish support. On 12 November 1721, a Miskito governor named Anníbel (described as a half-breed) took an oath of obedience to the Spanish king, along with 507 of his followers, and promised to deliver his king, Bernabé, and a General Pítar by 5 March 1722, to have them submit to the Spanish as well (Royal Cédula, 1913:439). This reference to Bernabé may have been to *Jeremy*, given the inconsistent spelling of the documents of the time. Pítar may have referred to Peter, who later became king. The delegation was stopped by sloops from Jamaica, and ties with the Spanish of Costa Rica were broken (Haya 1913:433). The Spanish documents raise the issue of just who acknowledged *Jeremy* as their king; apparently not all Miskito did.

It was during the reign of *Jeremy* that the Miskito became a fighting force for the Spanish to reckon with. At that time there were a number of Englishmen and other Europeans who settled among the Miskito; they became known as Shoresmen. *Jeremy's* visit to Jamaica coincided with English efforts to put an end to the buccaneers. Only a few years earlier, the English had passed laws against them. The Miskito had previously accompanied the buccaneers on their raids of Spanish communities. Therefore, even though the era of the buccaneer was coming to an end, as they began to settle down, the Miskito saw no reason to stop raiding. In fact, the reign

of Jeremy saw increased raids on Spanish territory by the Miskito, whose numbers surely included some of the buccaneers who refused to give up the practice of pirating.

Miskito incursions into Spanish-controlled territory began in earnest toward the end of the seventeenth century. The Miskitos raided on several fronts. They moved westward and northward into Spanish territories, including the Petén. They attacked and destroyed Catholic churches, killing and capturing other Indians. Initially the Miskito captured women in these raids, taking them back to the Miskito communities as wives. They also raided to the south, along the coast of Costa Rica, in particular the Matina Valley, which was rich in cacao. As they began raiding there on an annual basis, at harvest time, they started to sell their captives of both sexes and of all ages as slaves to Jamaican traders (Helms 1982 and this issue). They also became involved in the return of fugitive slaves (Travis 1895:7).

Raiding expeditions extended farther south along the southern coast of Costa Rica, inland into the southern mountains of Costa Rica, and into the Bocas del Toro area of what is today Panama. Indian captives—Talamancas, Viceitas, Urinamas, Abubaes, and the inhabitants of the Island of Tojár—were all sold to the English as slaves. Between 1710 and 1722, more than two thousand persons were said to have been taken as slaves from the Valley of Matina and the Island of Tojár alone (Haya 1913:432-33).

#### *Jeremy II (c.1720-c.1729)*

During the reign of a king known as Jeremy, the Miskito established a new kind of relationship with Jamaica, in which the governor of Jamaica, Nicholas Lawes, signed a formal agreement with King Jeremy, on 25 June 1720, to provide fifty men to track down rebellious blacks in the mountains of Jamaica (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:703-5).

If M.W. was correct in his observation that Jeremy I was about sixty years old in 1699, and if he was the same Jeremy who signed this agreement, he would have been about eighty years old at the time. Therefore, it is more likely that there were two Jeremys who were king. M.W. (1732:287-88) described a prince in 1699, although he provided no name, who was “a lusty strong-made fellow, of about 30, hath two wives, one concubine, and three children (himself esteem’d a Succhea).” In 1720 the prince, the son of Jeremy I, would have been fifty years of age. The historian Troy Floyd (1967:214), lists a Jeremy II who became king in 1723, but unfortunately provides no further information. Assuming that Floyd’s date is incorrect, as there are a number of factual errors concerning the Miskito kings in his study, but that there was a Jeremy II, then there is a strong possibility that it was Jeremy II, and not Jeremy I, who signed the agreement. Unfortunately the English did not feel compelled to make accurate references to the Miskito kings during the early history of the Miskito Kingdom. The notion that a second Jeremy signed the agreement is, however, further strengthened by a statement made by Governor Lawes in a set of instructions, on 24 June 1720, to Captain Samuel Towgood, who was to take Jeremy back to the Miskito Coast and recruit the fifty men (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:705-6):

Upon your arrival with King Jeremy at the Mosquitos, you are to assist him in getting his commission published in the most solemn manner, and in order to have all his subjects made



acquainted therewith, you will cause His Majesty's proclamation, herewith given you, to be proclaimed, requiring all the Mosquito Indians to pay due obedience thereunto.

The instructions to Towgood suggest that the second Jeremy had come to Jamaica to validate his claim on the kingship and was given a commission by the governor, which then had to be presented to other Miskito in order to convince them that he had the backing of the English. Of course the new king would have been most willing to sign an agreement with the governor of Jamaica, as it would have served to legitimize his right to the throne.

If, then, there were two Jeremys, there is no way of knowing when the second Jeremy succeeded the first. Since Lawes's instructions suggest that a commission was given to the king, it is probable that Jeremy was in the process of becoming the new king in 1720.

Further support for the Jeremy II hypothesis comes from the historian Frank Cundall (1937:115), who stated that the king of the Mosquitos had submitted himself to English rule during the government of the duke of Albermarle. This, of course, was Jeremy I. Cundall went on to say, "His successor, Jeremy, came over in December 1723, as was the custom—for the King only ruled by commission from the Governor of Jamaica—to learn His Grace's pleasure, accompanied by a good many of his subjects."

#### *Peter (c.1729-c.1739)*

The next individual to claim the kingship was named Peter. On 3 October 1729, Peter wrote the following letter to Governor Hunter of Jamaica (Great Britain, Public Record Office 1937:514):

Peter, King of the Musketoës, to Governor Hunter. Sandy Bay, Oct. 3, 1729. As there has always been a good understanding between the subjects of H.M. of Great Britain and the inhabitants of my Kingdom *etc. congratulates him on his appointment etc. Continues:—* Some disorders have happened lately among some of my subjects, inhabiting the outskirts of my Kingdom. The King my Royal Brother lately dying, myself hardly settled on the throne of my ancestors, the Governour also suddenly dying, left the Kingdom in such an unsettled condition as has given some of my people an opportunity to rise in rebellion and commit such outrages as I am ashamed to think of, having robb'd the white people living near them of all they had in the world, nay ev'n of their children, they are at present fled fearing the punishment due to their crimes. But be assured I shall use my utmost endeavours to settle these affairs to the general satisfaction of the white people resideing amongst us, and bring all the offenders to condign punishment *etc.*; in order to which I desire you should send me Commissions sign'd with the Great Seal of the Island, as also one for Jn. Bellawy, who I think a proper person to assist me in the office of Governour of the Southern parts of my Dominions, and likewise one for Charles Holby in the office of General of my Forces and overseer of the Northern parts of my Dominions *etc.*

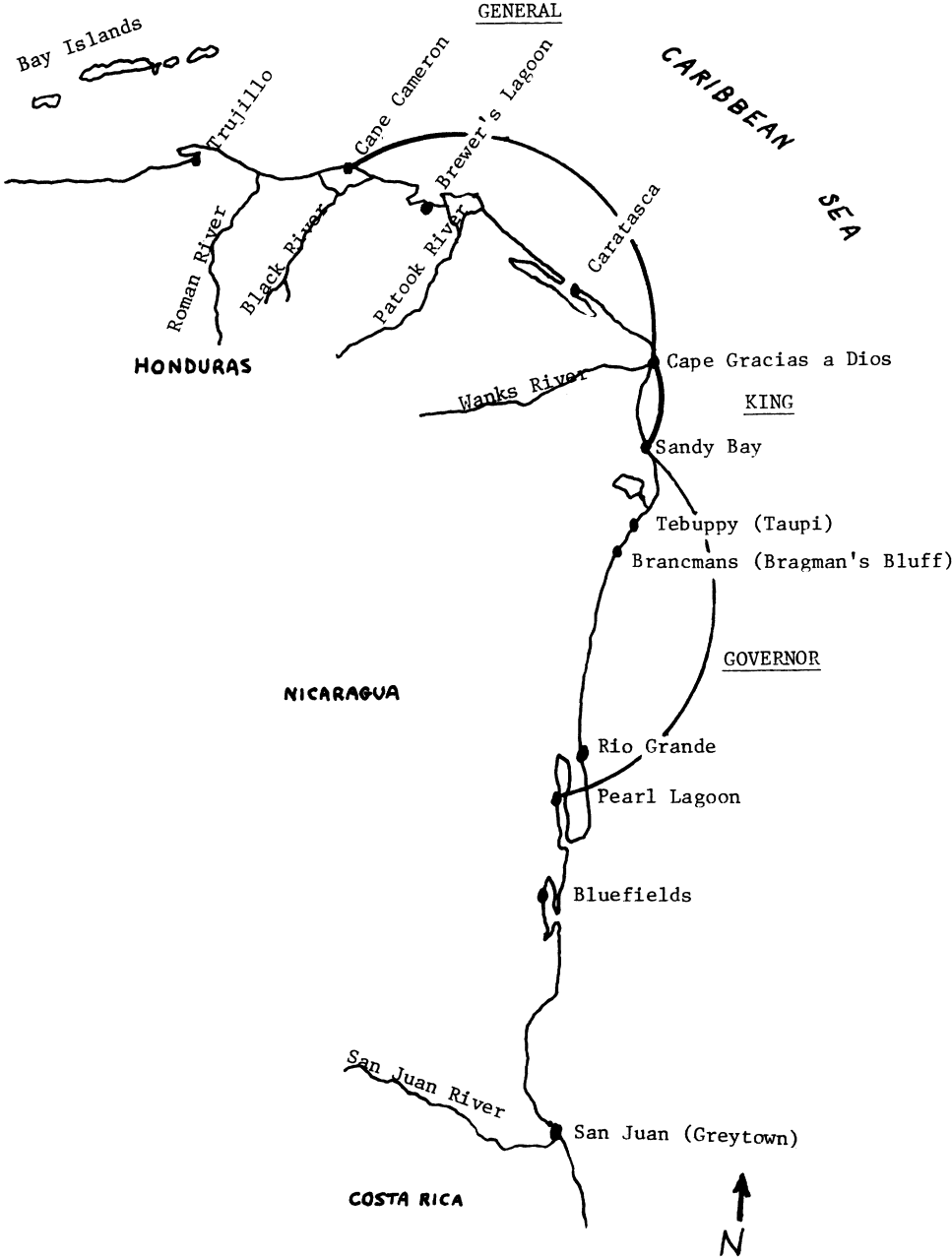
What is of special interest here is that Peter referred to the "King my Royal Brother." If Peter succeeded Jeremy II, then he may not have been Jeremy's brother. In the earlier quote by M.W. describing the first Jeremy, he mentions that the king had *one* son, the prince. It would seem that either Peter fabricated a genealogical link with the Oldman, Jeremy I, Jeremy II line in order to convince the Jamaicans of his right to office, or M.W. did not meet all of Jeremy's sons, or another son was born after M.W. left the coast. Thus far in the history of the Miskito kings, this is the first mention of succession from brother to brother. The previously mentioned lines passed from father to son. C.P. Lucas (1890:298) mentions that a Miskito

embassy came to Jamaica in 1725 and placed themselves under the duke of Portland, who was the governor of Jamaica. If this indicates a new king following Jeremy II, then Peter could have been his brother. However, Lucas probably was referring to the 1723 visit by Jeremy II.

Another explanation is that Peter was Jeremy's cousin. The present-day kinship system of the Miskito is characterized by Hawaiian cousin terminology. In other words, the terms for brother (*moini*) and sister (*lakra*) are extended to all cousins (Helms 1971:63). Prior to the turn of the century, the *moini* and *lakra* were apparently extended only to brother and male parallel cousins and sister and female parallel cousins, respectively. Male cross-cousins were referred to as *waika* and female cross-cousins as *klua* (Helms 1971:67-69). If this earlier system of terminology was also in use during the colonial era, Peter may have been Jeremy's parallel cousin; the term could just as easily have been translated as *brother* by whomever wrote the letter to Governor Hunter. The possibility that Peter and Jeremy II were parallel cousins is further supported by the fact that M.W. (1732:290) mentioned that Jeremy I did have a brother who lived far up the Wanks River and that the brother had children. However, M.W. did not specify if any of the children were sons. M.W. (1732:290) also reported that Jeremy I's brother had lost his Indian wife and "at that time he made use of his sister, she being as it were a widow." It is possible that the sister might actually have been a cousin because of the Hawaiian cousin terminology. If the parents of Peter were this couple, the fact that both his father and mother were close blood relatives of Jeremy I might have enhanced his claim as successor.

At this point in time, there were still three positions of authority on the coast, king, governor, and general. The fact that Peter asked the governor of Jamaica to name three new men to these positions—Peter as king, John Bellawy as governor, and Charles Hobby (spelled Holby in the 1729 letter) as general—might be taken as an indication that a new group had been attempting to take over control on the coast and were asking for Jamaican legitimization. On the other hand, continuity with Jeremy is suggested by the fact that Charles Hobby was already an individual of considerable local power during the reign of Jeremy I, according to Captain Uring (1928:121), who visited the area in 1711. If Peter had been general under Jeremy I and Jeremy II, as the Spanish documents suggest, then he would have had to appoint someone to fill that office once he became king; if the governor had died, then that office also had to be filled. Therefore three new leaders could have taken office without necessarily indicating a change in the group controlling the coast.

Exactly how long Peter's reign lasted is not clear. In 1731 General Hobby wrote to Governor Hunter (Great Britain, Public Record Office 1938:340) mentioning Peter as the king of the Miskitos. By 1740, when the first superintendent arrived at the shore, a young man named Edward, less than twenty years old, was the Miskito king (United States Senate 1853:84). Since Edward was so young, it is probable that Peter remained king until approximately 1739. According to Setzekorn (1981:146), the king of the Mosquito placed himself under the protection of Great Britain in 1739, which may have been when Edward became king. In addition, Edward is mentioned as king in the Spanish documents in 1739 (Sorsby 1969:12-13).



Map 1. Miskito Kingdom, c. 1740

*Edward (c.1739-1755)*

Edward was Jeremy II's eldest son (Sorsby 1969:89). He was either Peter's nephew or his first cousin once removed. Hobby continued as general in 1740 (United States Senate 1853:83), but by 1741 the position was held by Handyside, who was probably Hobby's son (Sorsby 1969:27). The position of governor was filled by a new man, John Briton, and for the first time the position of admiral is mentioned, filled by an individual named Dilly (United States Senate 1853:83). King Edward's residence was at Sandy Bay. Raids on Spanish settlements continued, and in 1756 the Miskito were credited with the assassination of the governor of Costa Rica.

It was during the reign of Edward that the British began their first serious attempt to exert more formal control over the Miskito Coast. Because England had once again gone to war against Spain, Governor Trelawney of Jamaica created a position of "superintendent of the Mosquito Shore" stationed at Black River in the northern part of the kingdom, and the first individual to fill that position was Robert Hodgson. Hodgson (United States Senate 1853:84) told the Miskitos that "as they had long acknowledged themselves subjects of Great Britain, the governor of Jamaica had sent me to take possession of their country in his Majesty's name." He then planted a standard, read the articles of possession, and fired a gun.

Because Edward was still very young in 1740, when Hodgson arrived on the coast, he still had not collected a great deal of support. According to Hodgson (Sorsby 1969:18), the structure of the kingdom was as follows (see Map 1):

Three chiefs ruled over separate Mosquito provinces, or "guards". Governor Britain, "a sensible old man", ruled the pure Indians south of Sandy Bay; King Edward, very young and still "not much observed" by his people, ruled the guard of Zambos between Sandy Bay and Cape Gracias a Dios; and General Hobby governed the second guard of Zambos west of Black River. Each office was hereditary.

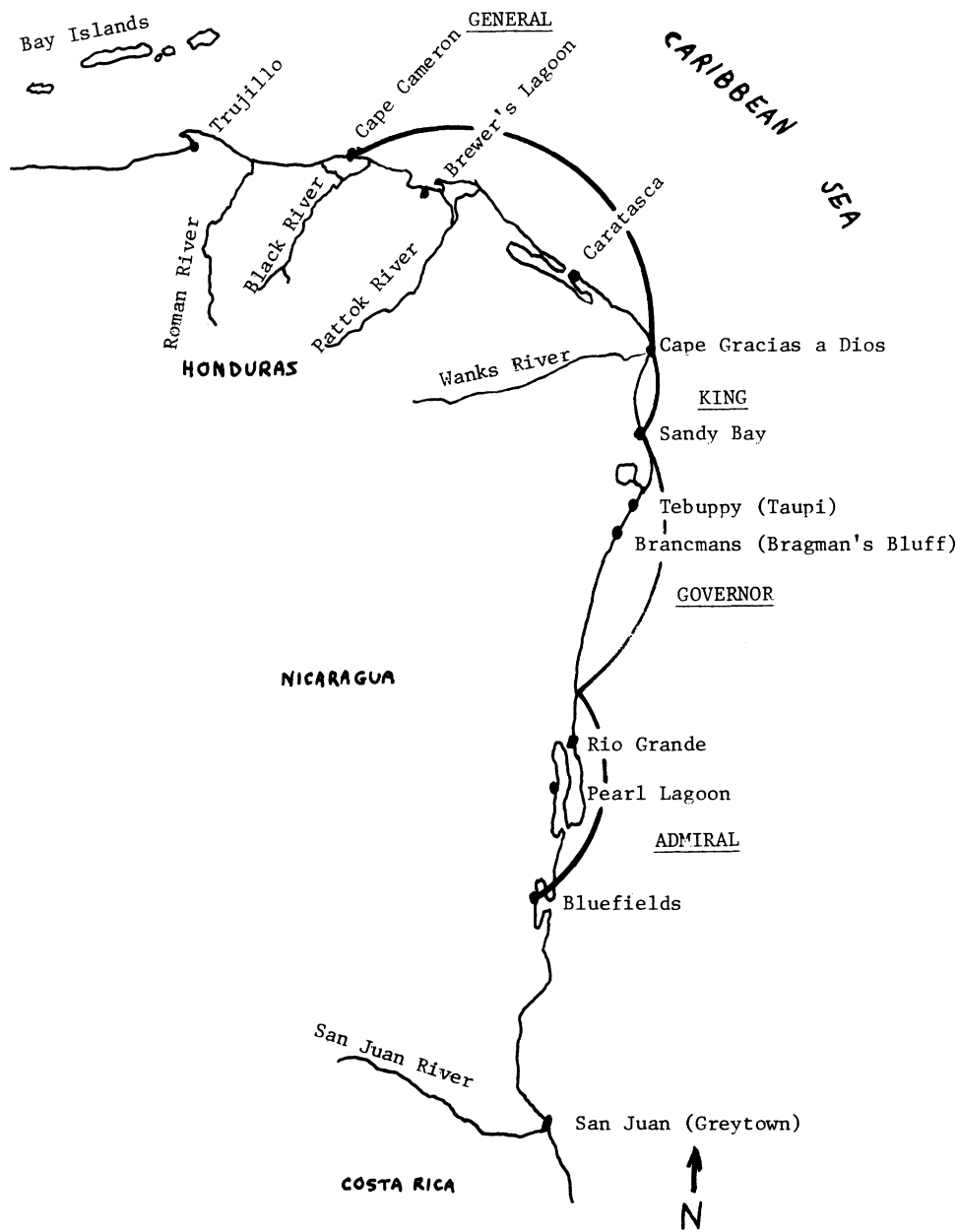
During Edward's reign, the Black River settlement of Shoremen began to grow and prosper as a center of clandestine trade with the Spanish. A great deal of this trade was controlled by William Pitt, the coast's wealthiest and most powerful settler. In the south, at Bluefields, a second powerful settler, Henry Corrin, controlled the Indian slave trade and also engaged in clandestine trade with the Spanish.

*George I (1755-1776)*

George I was the brother of Edward and the son of Jeremy II. He was crowned king in Sandy Bay in February 1755. King Edward's eldest son was still a child when his father died. Consequently the Miskito chiefs elected Edward's brother to succeed him. The new king continued to reside at Sandy Bay (Long 1970:323). According to Bryan Edwards (1819:210), the Miskito Coast was now divided into four domains, two zambo and two Indian (see Map 2):

The general's people are Samboes, and stretch from Black River to near Cape Gracias-a-Dios. The king's chief residence is about twelve leagues south of the cape, his people are also Samboes, and his immediate precinct reaches to the cape, and runs far up the country. The governor's precinct joins to the king's, and extends between twenty and thirty leagues to the southward, til it meets the admiral's. The people under these chieftains are pure Indians.

During the reign of George, a number of new superintendents were appointed: Joseph Otway in 1759, Robert Hodgson (the Younger) in 1768, John Ferguson in 1776, and James Lawrie later in 1776. The first Moravian missionary, Christian



Map 2. Miskito Kingdom, c. 1760



Frederick Post, a Polish Prussian, arrived during George's rule, in 1764, and remained for twenty years (Sorsby 1969:194). He seems to have been more concerned with the politics of the Shoremen than with spreading the Gospel among Indians.

While George was king, the Spanish made an attempt to get the support of Dilson, the admiral. Dilson seems to have been a strong man who raised his status from that of local leader to major leader; he was the first admiral of any importance. The Spanish appointed Dilson "ruler (*gobernador*) of the Miskito nation" (Fernández 1907:23-25). The Miskito leaders then became divided. George and Briton opposed Dilson; Admiral Israel was Admiral Dilson's closest ally. However, both Dilson and Israel died suddenly and somewhat mysteriously in March 1770. The Spanish believed they were killed by Superintendent Hodgson to prevent them from siding with the Spanish (Sorsby 1969:171).

George also had problems controlling his general, Tempest, who had succeeded Handyside by at least 1764 (Sorsby 1969:136). Tempest became a powerful force because of his close ties with the Shoremen of Black River. In 1766 he went to London with a Shoreman, George Hewm, to request the establishment on the coast of a government independent of Jamaica. After Tempest returned, George believed that he was planning to become king by assassination. George sought the aid of Governor Briton and Admiral Dilson. While Briton agreed to support the king, Dilson refused, which may have played a role in George's refusal in turn to support him in 1770. The assassination plot never materialized (Sorsby 1969:156-57).

In 1774 the king "visited Jamaica for the purpose of acknowledging himself and his subjects to be under the sovereignty of his Majesty" (Great Britain, Privy Council 1912:385). He was furnished with goods valued at 26£ 19s 3d. Also in 1774, George reportedly sent a barrel of Miskito Shore soil to his "brother king, George III of England, with a pledge of 5000 Miskito warriors, if necessary, to put down any revolt that might erupt in the North American colonies" (Sorsby 1969:203), and sent his son, also called George, and his brother, Isaac, to England to protest Superintendent Hodgson's views on slavery. Although Indian slavery had been outlawed by Jamaican law in 1741, the slave trade was still flourishing in 1774 and, in fact, continued until emancipation was declared at Belize in 1833 (Sorsby 1969:202-7).

During most of George's reign, John Briton continued as governor. Later, about 1775, he was replaced by Timothy Briton, who was probably his son. In 1777 both George and Governor Timothy Briton died during a smallpox epidemic. Both men were succeeded by their sons—George II and Colville Briton.

### *George II (1777-1800)*

George II, also referred to as Young George, is one of the better known Miskito kings. An African ex-slave, Olaudah Equiano, happened to be on the same boat in which George returned to the Miskito Coast from England in 1776, and made the following observations (1969:250-51) about George:

Before I embarked, I found with the Doctor four Musquito Indians, who were chiefs in their own country, and were brought here by some English traders for some selfish ends. One of them was the Musquito king's son; a youth of about eighteen years of age; and whilst he was here he was baptized by the name of George. They were going back at the government's expense, after having been in England about twelve months, during which they learned to speak pretty good English.

While on board ship, Equiano tried to make a religious convert out of George, but the other Indians ridiculed Young George, and he stopped his instruction in Christianity. One of the individuals who accompanied George to England was his uncle Isaac.

George was crowned king in March 1777 at Black River by Superintendent Lawrie (Wright 1808:22; Pim and Seemann 1869:312). Because he was only nineteen years old at the time, some of the actual decision making may have passed, at least temporarily, to his uncle Isaac, who took a new title, duke of York. George is described as a zambo by Floyd (1967) and as a mulatto by Holms (1978). George gained the reputation of being a cruel tyrant and a womanizer. According to Dunham (1850:93-94), George had had no less than fourteen wives; Strangeways (1822:332) claimed that George had had twenty-two wives. José del Río, a lieutenant in the Spanish Royal Marines, gave the following description of George in 1793 (1913: 541-42):

George, the Chief of the *Mosquitos*—the one they call the “King”—receives all the marks of respect from his Indians due a sovereign. He assumes a certain gravity which makes him more feared than loved; he is in fact cruel, even toward the fair and weaker sex that he idolizes and signs of his brutality are seen, for it is rare that a woman that he uses does not appear with her shoulders covered with scars.

In an account from about 1780, attributed to Stephen Kemble, Sandy Bay continued to be the king’s headquarters (Anonymous 1885:424):

This is the principal residence of the Mosquito King and his Chiefs; the Town is pleasantly situated on the banks of a Lagoon which has a communication with the Sea by means of land cut by some of the former Kings at present about 150 feet in width; it abounds in fish; the banks are low and fit only for Rice and pasture. The Vicinity of this place to the Mosquito quays where Turtle can be easily procured, with its exemption from troublesome insects, seemed to have chiefly recommended it as the Capital of the Mosquito King.

This author mentions an inland “country residence” of the king as well.

The era in which George II reigned over the Miskito was one of great turmoil. Robert Hodgson and James Lawrie were jockeying for control as superintendent. On 14 July 1786, the English signed a treaty with Spain, in which they agreed to withdraw from the Miskito coast. In 1787 some 2,650 Englishmen and their slaves were evacuated from the Miskito Shore (Bolland 1977:40). While the English were fighting with the Spanish, there were important struggles for power going on within the Miskito power structure. Shortly before the Spaniard José del Río’s 1793 visit to the coast, George brought about the death of his chief adversary, Sulero, who ruled at Pearl Lagoon. Río (1913:542) commented that George “seeks to do the same with all the Chiefs of the other tribes, and thus remain the absolute despot.”

The murder of Sulero was one in a complex chain of hostilities among the different Miskito leaders. While George was king, his uncle Isaac held the unique position within the Miskito Kingdom of duke-regent, a title which had not been used previously and which was never used again. The general was Tempest, then John Smith (called Juan Esmit in the Spanish documents), and finally Robinson. By 1778 the twenty-eight-year-old Trelawny “Alparis” Dilson (also called Alparis Delce, Alparéz Talan Delze, and Dfícem in the Spanish accounts) was admiral. The governor was Colville Briton (also called Carlos Bretel or Bretot in the Spanish documents). The admiral’s chief town was Pearl Lagoon, and the governor resided at Tebuppy (Taupí Lagoon). The location of General Tempest’s town was at Brewer’s

Lagoon, on the Patook River, near Black River. The admiral and governor both made overtures to the Spanish for support and feuded with one another. Briton was the uncle of Alparis Dilson and the brother of an individual named Clementi, who later became governor (Floyd 1967:172-82).

In 1778 a former British subject named Jeremiah Terry was hired by Spain to try to induce the Miskito along the southern part of the kingdom to depose George and crown his cousin, Prince Eugene, in his place. The mission was unsuccessful (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:786). During Terry's stay on the coast, King George refused to cooperate with Superintendent Lawrie in attacking Terry, and Lawrie decommissioned George as king. Governor Dalling renewed the commission some months later, when George went to Kingston in 1779 (Sorsby 1969:239-43).

In the spring of 1782, Briton, with English, Miskito, and Carib troops, attacked along the Nicaraguan frontier. They took prisoners, including a ten-year-old *ladina* girl from Juigalpa, named María Manuela Rodríguez Mojica (Floyd 1967:143-74). Briton fell in love with the girl and converted to Catholicism.

In 1788 both Briton and George were invited to Cartagena. They were both given Spanish uniforms, gold-tipped canes, and haircuts. On 1 July 1788, Colville Briton was baptized in Cartagena and given the new name of Carlos Antonio de Castilla. His son was also baptized under the name of José María de Castilla and was sent to Spain to be educated. King George accepted the Spanish gifts but refused to be baptized. Both Briton and George returned to the Miskito Coast. George remained pro-English, but Briton switched his allegiance to the Spanish. On 11 January 1789, Briton and María Manuela Rodríguez Mojica were married in León by Bishop Villegas (Floyd 1967:180). The other Miskito leaders considered Briton a traitor and gradually he lost all support. In 1790 he was murdered by the followers of his nephew, Admiral Alparis Dilson.

In the northern section of the kingdom, the political turmoil was just as great. General Tempest died about the time the British began to withdraw from the shore (1786). He was apparently succeeded by John Smith until Tempest's young son, Luttrell Tempest, could assume the position of general. Luttrell was taken by the British when they evacuated Black River and sent to England, where he was educated until about 1795. Luttrell then went to Jamaica and finally to Belize, fearing to return to the Miskito Shore, because by then his brother, Lowrie Robinson, had assumed his title. Although Luttrell Tempest referred to Lowrie Robinson as his "brother," the different last names suggest this might be another instance where the kinship term *moini* actually referred to a parallel cousin. Luttrell believed that Lowrie Robinson might kill him if he returned to Black River. In 1796 Luttrell Tempest requested that the authorities in Belize send him back to England to continue his schooling (Burdon 1931:219-20).

As the English began to withdraw from the shore, the Spanish entered the area, assuming that they now controlled the coast. They organized several colonization programs that brought about 1,300 settlers from Spain and the Canary Islands to settle at Black River, Gracias a Dios, Bluefields, and at the mouth of the San Juan River. Settlers began arriving as early as 1787, but by 1789 it became apparent that the Miskitos still controlled the area. In addition, the settlers were ill-prepared for living on the shore. Most of the colonists began to move into the interior or to

relocate to Trujillo. In 1800 General Robinson attacked Black River, putting the final touches to the Spanish withdrawal (Floyd 1967:168-70).

Like the Miskito kings before him, George also engaged in long-distance travel to visit the English. He arrived in Jamaica in 1796 and from there went on to visit England (Nugent 1907:270, 273). Two additional elements of importance should be mentioned. At the end of George's reign, the Miskito began to establish close ties with Belize, probably because of the number of individuals who had evacuated the coast and had moved to Belize, and approximately 4,000 Black Caribs (Garífuna) were brought to the Bay Islands off the coast of Honduras in 1797. They were later granted land on the Honduran coast by the Miskito king.

According to the historian Caiger (1951:102), on the eve of the Battle of Saint George's Cay in Belize in 1798, King George asked the British at Belize for arms to help them fight in the expected Spanish attack. After the English victory at the Cay, two Miskito leaders went to Belize to offer congratulations. Two years later, King George went to Belize to personally offer his congratulations. The Belizeans voted £150 for his entertainment while he was in Belize (Burdon 1931:280).

Various sources agree that George's children went to Jamaica to be educated. However, there is considerable disagreement over the details. Both Caiger and Orlando Roberts are incorrect in their accounts. Caiger (1951:102) says they were sent by George in 1798. According to Roberts (1965:146), the children were taken to Belize only after George's death, by a trader who thought he might "derive great advantages from the possession of these children" and then "persuaded the chiefs that they might derive great benefits by having their future king educated 'English fashion,' so that he might understand something of the laws, manners and customs, of their friends the English." However, a letter from the duke of Portland, governor of Jamaica, to Governor Balcarred of Belize, dated 11 July 1798, approved a request made on 30 April of the same year to receive and educate King George's son at Jamaica (Burdon 1931:246), although it was not until five years after George's death that his son was actually taken to Jamaica by the commander-in-chief of Jamaica (Burdon 1934:5).

Roberts (1965:146) gives an account of George's death in 1800:

Old king George, was of the mixed, or Negro and Indian breed; he was of a cruel, barbarous, and vindictive disposition; he had been the means of enslaving many Indians of the Blanco, Woolwa, and Cookra tribes; and like all the other Mosquito chiefs, had a great number of wives and women, whom he treated with such cruelty, that some of them died under his hands. The murder of one of these women, under circumstances of peculiar barbarity, called forth the resentment of her friends, who created a riot, during which the King was fired upon, and killed, by his own people.

According to George Henderson (1811:219), who visited the shore in 1804, only a few years after George's death the inhabitants were attributing George's death to his brother, Prince Stephen.

### *Prince Stephen (1800-1816)*

The death of George II created a new power vacuum on the coast. English influence was at its lowest point since the creation of the superintendency. Spanish influence was also minimal. However, among the Miskito there was no adult leader to take George's place. The previous lines of kingship had passed, for the most part,

from father to son. But now the logical heir to the throne was only about seven years old. George's brother, Stephen, assumed the title of prince or king-regent and led the Miskito for at least part of the time the heir was studying in Jamaica.<sup>5</sup> It seems clear that he was never able to claim the office of king because, according to George Henderson (1811:219-20), General Robinson would not let him.

As had been their previous policy with George II, the Spanish also made overtures to Stephen. A commission to Black River, sent by the captain-general of Guatemala, under the command of Captain Pareja, brought Prince Stephen to Guatemala, where he received all the honors customarily bestowed on the head of a country (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:674). However, because of Robinson's power, Stephen remained pro-English and continued the Miskito attacks on the Spanish. The headquarters of the new Miskito leader was again at Sandy Bay (O'Neill 1913:585).

On 14 November 1815, a meeting was held by Stephen and thirty-three Miskito chiefs, at which time they signed a declaration of their acceptance of George Frederic (George's eldest son) as their new king (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:687).<sup>6</sup>

While various English and Spanish sources mention Prince Stephen, Roberts does not. Roberts says that the Miskito Kingdom was divided into three governments while young George Frederic was in Jamaica (see Map 3). One government, from Roman River to Patook, was under General Robinson. This territory included "Caribs, Poyers, Mosquito men, and some negroes formerly attached to the British settlements" (Roberts 1965:146). The second division was from Caratasca, or Croata, to Sandy Bay and Duckwarra, and was under the rule of the admiral, whom Roberts described only as the brother of the late king. This brother was probably Prince Stephen. His territory included "all of the Mosquito men proper, or mixed breed of Samboes and Indians." Apparently the Dilson line had lost its power, and the governor completely controlled the southern section of the kingdom, while admiral was now the title given to the ruler of the central division.

Finally, Roberts (1965:147) mentioned that the third division, which stretched from Brancmans to Rio Grande, was under the governor. Roberts incorrectly identified the governor as "Don Carlos," which would have been Colville Briton, already dead when George died. Elsewhere Roberts (1965:138) mentioned that Briton's brother, Clementi, took over as governor following the death of Briton. Therefore Clementi, not Briton, must have been governor when George Frederic went to Jamaica. In their oath of submission to George Frederic as rightful heir to the throne, signed by many of the Miskito leaders on 14 November 1815, Clementi ("Clementine of Tobapec") is listed as governor (Great Britain, House of Commons 1848:46-47). Because Belize now began exerting greater influence over the Miskito Shore than Jamaica did, George Frederic wrote to Sir George Arthur, superintendent of Honduras, asking if he could be crowned at Belize. On 14 January 1816, Arthur replied quite favorably to the request and suggested that the coronation take place on the queen of England's birthday (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:679-80).

#### *George Frederic (1816-1824)*

George Frederic, sometimes referred to as Frederic or George Frederic Augustus, was crowned at Belize on 18 January 1816. He was the eldest son of George II and



the brother of Robert Charles Frederic.<sup>7</sup> While George Frederic was living in Jamaica as a youth, he and his great uncle visited Mount Salus twice. This was the home of Lady Nugent, the American wife of Major-General George Nugent, who was lieutenant-governor of Jamaica from 27 July 1801 to 20 February 1806. The first visit occurred on 13 and 14 August 1804. Lady Nugent (1907:269-70) described the young king and his great uncle, Isaac, who called himself Count Stamford, as well as the duke of York, as follows:<sup>8</sup>

He is about six or eight years old, a plain puny looking child, but seems to have a very high and determined spirit. His features are rather better than those of negroes, and his hair is so much straighter, that he is evidently of a mixed breed; but his uncle has the woolly hair of the negro, with flat features, and a very wide mouth.

The young King was dressed in a scarlet uniform, and wore a crown upon his head, of which he seemed very proud. The crown was of silver gilt, ornamented with mock stones, and was sent from England, some years ago, for his father. Both the little King and his uncle seemed to hold it in high estimation.

While in Jamaica, George Frederic maintained contact with some of the Miskito leaders. For example, in a deposition by Captain Peter Shepherd in 1844 (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:689), he mentioned that he had frequently carried chiefs of the Valiente Indians to Jamaica to visit George Frederic while he was studying there. Captain Shepherd was a long-time trader on the Miskito Coast, who in 1826 was described as already having traded there for twenty years (Hale 1826:16).

During the visit to Jamaica, the governor provided George Frederic with eighteen hundred dollars' worth of clothing, spent fifteen hundred dollars repairing the Miskito king's crown, and furnished four thousand dollars' worth of gifts for the young king's followers (Dunham 1850:96).

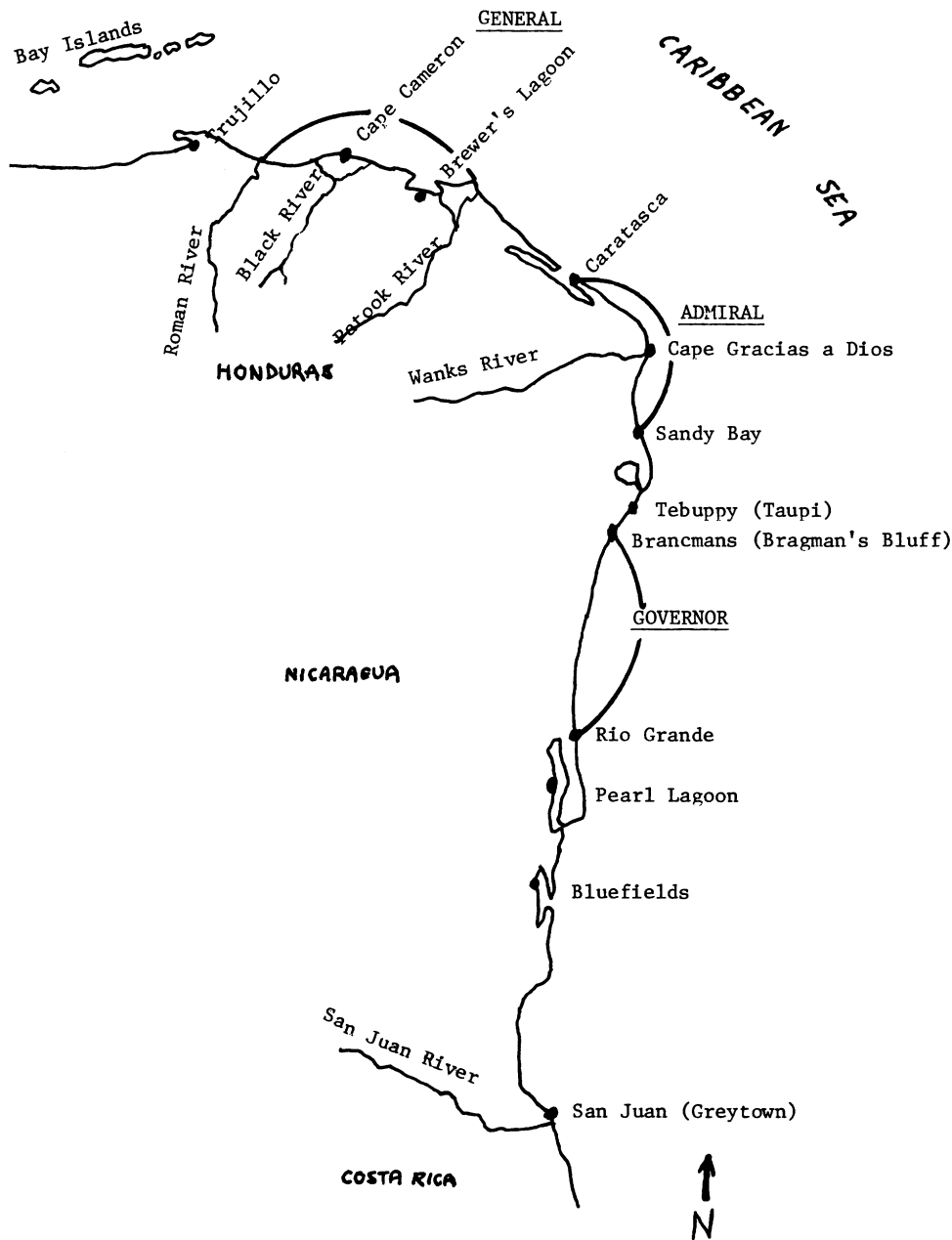
Roberts (1965:133) gives the following description of George Frederic after he had returned to the Miskito Coast:

He was a young man, about twenty-four years of age, of bright copper colour, with long curly hair hanging in ringlets down the sides of his face; his hands and feet small, a dark expressive eye, and very white teeth. He was an active and handsome figure, with the appearance of greater agility than strength. In other respects I found him, on further acquaintance, wild as the deer on his native savannahs.

George Frederic maintained more than two residences. The house at Cape Gracias a Dios was his primary home; there was one upstream from the cape and another at Sandy Bay (Dunham 1850:129; Roberts 1965:128). According to Dunham (1850:110), there were now two stores at the cape. One was run by an American and the other was run by an Irishman, who sold goods imported from Jamaica (Strangeways 1822:19).

In 1816 George Frederic was crowned at Belize. The new king confided to Roberts (1965:148-49) that he was sorry that he had left his country and gone to Jamaica. He felt that he was now a stranger among the Miskito. According to Roberts (1965:149), the king seems to have found solace in drink.

As a new king long removed from his country, George Frederic had difficulty reestablishing centralized authority over the kingdom. His father had been a powerful leader but had created animosity with other Miskito leaders that was inherited by George Frederic when he returned as king. During the sixteen years that the Miskito lacked a king, both general and governor attempted to consolidate their own power. The admiral apparently never emerged as a strong leader.



Map 3. Miskito Kingdom, c. 1815

General Robinson, living near Black River, appears to have become the most important Miskito leader following George II's death. According to George Henderson (1811:178), Robinson was of pure Indian descent. He became both powerful and rich. Floyd (1967:185) stated that he even called himself king. According to Strangeways (1822:144), Robinson became a wealthy cattle rancher with a herd of at least five hundred head at a ranch on the Plantain River. Robinson had become so powerful that he could challenge the authority of the new young king. Roberts (1965:147-48) mentioned that following George Frederic's coronation, the British sloop of war that was returning the new king to the Miskito Coast accidentally landed at General Robinson's residence. Since Robinson was there when the ship arrived, he could not have participated in the coronation. George Frederic then proceeded to insult and quarrel with the general, which Roberts leaves unexplained. Certainly the new king must have felt slighted that the general had not attended the coronation, but perhaps even more importantly, General Robinson's signature was conspicuously absent from the submission to George Frederic, drawn up by Prince Stephen, that the other Miskito leaders had signed on 14 November 1815.

The situation in the southern part of the kingdom was not much better for George Frederic. Governor Clementi was still angered that George Frederic's father had apparently been involved in the murder of his brother, Carlos Briton. Roberts (1965:137) mentioned that Clementi refused to attend one of the king's feasts; since the death of his brother Carlos, Clementi had never visited the king. Although George Henderson described Robinson as Indian, according to Roberts, Clementi was the only pure-blood Indian who held a position of such importance in the Miskito Kingdom, and he commanded great respect and loyalty from the various Indians under the Miskito. The hostility between Clementi and George Frederic was further aggravated during a visit to Clementi made by George Frederic's brother, Robert, and a favorite black who belonged to the king. The black insulted Clementi and started to destroy some of his property. Robert refused to intervene. Clementi then shot and killed the black. Roberts (1965:138) stated that the king could not dare to attack the governor openly but did seek revenge by trying to capture Clementi's cattle.

The situation was further complicated by the tie between a new admiral, Earnee, and Clementi. As he had done with general and governor, the young king also created hostility between himself and the new admiral. In this case, the king raped one of Earnee's favorite wives. As a result, Earnee, a black, formed an alliance with Clementi, by marrying Clementi's younger sister (Roberts 1965:138). It is unclear at what point and under what circumstances Earnee became admiral. During Orlando Roberts's stay on the coast, the king attempted to improve relations with the general, governor, and admiral because he feared a civil war.

Not only did George Frederic have internal problems with his native leaders; he quickly developed external problems that brought him into conflict with the British authorities in Belize. According to the historian Hasbrouck (1927:440), George Frederic and other Miskito leaders began to grant concessions of land in exchange for rum and other favors. The most important of these grants was supposedly made on 29 April 1820, to the Scottish adventurer Sir Gregor McGregor. The grant covered 70,000 square miles along the valley of the Black River, an area which became known as Poyais. Previously known as the Alberapoyer Estate, this land had been given to

several Shoremen by George I, in 1771. Whether George Frederic actually granted the land while in a drunken stupor, or whether the unscrupulous McGregor fabricated the grant himself, is unclear. In any case, McGregor spent his time in England selling the land to unsuspecting individuals and becoming rich from it. McGregor gave himself the title of "His Highness Gregor, Cazique of Poyais." A book entitled *Sketch of the Mosquito Shore, Including the Territory of Poyais*, written in 1822 by Thomas Strangeways, who took the title of "Captain 1st Native Poyer Regiment, and Aid-de-Camp," extolled the virtue of the Poyais territory. Strangeways presented such an exaggerated picture of the potential of the Miskito Coast for settlement that one cynical reviewer (Anonymous 1822:158) wrote that Strangeways portrayed Poyais as a paradise "where all manner of grain grows without sowing, and the most delicious fruits without planting; where cows and horses support themselves, and where . . . roasted pigs run about with forks in their backs, crying, 'come, eat me!'"

In 1823 the settlers to whom McGregor had sold land began arriving at Black River, only to be faced with disaster. Instead of a flourishing town, the settlers found only ruins overgrown with jungle. To make matters worse, as barrels of supplies were unloaded, they were rolled through the salt water and spoiled. Then the captain of the ship set sail with approximately three-quarters of the supplies still on board (Hasbrouck 1927:446-47).

While the settlers were attempting to survive under such difficult conditions, they received a message from King George Frederic that he had declared the McGregor grant null and void and required that the settlers take an oath of allegiance to him, since this was Miskito territory (Low 1823:3).

Edward Low and several other settlers traveled to Gracias a Dios to see the Miskito king. According to Low (1823:3), the king

declared that [the] grant should be null and void, as such was not given by him, nor could it be supposed that he would give away his power and sovereignty to such a person as Sir Gregor M'Gregor: and that the assumed title of Cacique of Poyais was not given by him . . . and that he 'George Frederick Augustus, King of the Mosquito nation, etc.' should not nor would allow any such title or any person to reside in his dominions under such a Government: but as settlers had been led away by Sir Gregor's false representations, they might reside in the country, and even retain their grants of land.

Many of the settlers died shortly after their arrival. Others were saved by a ship sent from Belize to rescue them. Apparently none of the settlers chose to remain and accept the Miskito king as their monarch.<sup>9</sup>

The comments that George Frederic made to Low are interesting because they suggest that George Frederic was less concerned about the land than he was about losing more of his political control. The fact that McGregor claimed the title of cacique seems to be the main reason that George Frederic declared the grant null and void, in spite of his apparent concern that the settlers swear allegiance to him as Miskito king. The settlers seem to have misunderstood the issue and felt that he was trying to make them give up their English citizenship and their allegiance to the British monarch; in fact, George Frederic seems to have been concerned mainly with their accepting him, not McGregor, as the legitimate ruling power on the Miskito Shore.

George Frederic is believed to have died in March 1824, when, according to Stout (1859:170), he was strangled by one of his wives and his body thrown into

the sea. His brother, Robert Charles Frederic, however, placed the blame for the death on a Captain Peter Le-le-Shaw of Guernsey (Pim and Seemann 1869:293).

Disagreement surrounding the line of kingship following George Frederic marks another period of confusion in the literature. One version, the more generally accepted, suggests a series of three or four kings within a period of about one year, with stability finally achieved by the coronation of Robert Charles Frederic in 1825. The other version suggests that Robert Charles Frederic directly followed George Frederic. It is the second version which will be favored here, for reasons discussed below.

The popularization of the first version can be attributed mainly to the American E.G. Squier. It reflects Squier's often-stated view that the Miskito kings were nothing but puppets of the British. According to Squier ("Bard" 1965:346-47), George Frederic was succeeded by his half-brother, Robert:

But it was soon found that Robert was in the Spanish interest, and he was accordingly set aside, by the British agents, who took into favor a Sambo, named 'George Frederick.' But he, too, proved to be an indifferent tool, and either died, or was dropped, for another Sambo, who was called by the high-sounding name of 'Robert Charles Frederick,' and who promised to answer every purpose.

The Nicaraguan historian José Dolores Gámez (1939:171) gives the same line of succession, probably using Squier as his source. Later writers have generally accepted his view of the succession: a series of individuals in office over a period of one year, with no genealogical connection between George Frederic and the last individual, Robert Charles Frederic. Where did Squier and Gámez obtain this information? Orlando Roberts appears to be the original source. In a footnote, Roberts (1965:150) wrote that he had heard, secondhand, of George Frederic's death after he left the coast. Roberts stated that George Frederic was succeeded by his brother Robert, who, in turn, was succeeded by James, "descended from a more ancient branch of the family."

In an 1850 article, Squier (1850:201) gave Macgregor as his source, without mentioning the particular work to which he was referring. According to Macgregor, George Frederic was followed by his half-brother Robert, who was thrust aside for a "Sambo" named George Frederic, "a descendant from a more ancient branch of the family." The work by Macgregor that Squier referred to was apparently *Commercial Tariffs and Regulations of the Several States of Europe and America*, published in 1847 by John Macgregor. Macgregor relied on Roberts very heavily and cited him periodically. However, Macgregor (1847:39) apparently misquoted Roberts in writing that after George Frederic's death, "Robert, his half-brother, succeeded him, and had a brief reign. The next king, George Frederick, descended from a more ancient branch of the family, was succeeded by his brother, the late King Robert Charles Frederick." Squier, in turn, publicized Macgregor's misquoted version. The fact that the names involved in the succession are not the same in Roberts as compared to the other writers is not too surprising, given the poor scholarship of Squier and Macgregor and the continued carelessness of such writers as Gámez and De Kalb, who apparently took their information either directly from Roberts or indirectly from Squier. Other than Roberts's footnote, based on unverifiable, secondhand information, there appear to be no other data to support the view that the line of Miskito kingship went from George Frederic to Robert to James (or George Frederic) to Robert Charles.



There is clearly stronger evidence to suggest that George Frederic was succeeded directly by his brother, Robert, and that this Robert was Robert Charles Frederic. In other words, the line of succession passed directly from George Frederic to his brother, Robert Charles Frederic. This conclusion is based on several kinds of data. Several passages in Thomas Young's (1971) account make it clear that Robert Charles Frederic was George Frederic's brother and that there had been only one George Frederic.

In the beginning of his account, Young (1971:1-2) mentioned that Robert Charles Frederic was king during his visit to the Miskito Shore and that Robert Charles Frederic was the brother of George Frederic:

We sailed from Gravesend in July 1839 . . . bound for Cape Gracias a Dios, there to deliver our credentials to the King of the Mosquito nation, Robert Charles Frederic, (who had been invested with the crown, on the demise of his brother George Frederic, with the concurrence of the British Government,) and from thence proceed to Black River.

If this were the only evidence of Robert Charles Frederic's tie with the previous king, it still would not be possible to demonstrate that he was referring to the first George Frederic, rather than to the second George Frederic mentioned in the Squier-Macgregor version. However, later in Young's account (1971:159), he mentions that "the present king, Robert Charles Frederic, received his education at Jamaica." Since George II had sent both George Frederic and Robert to Jamaica to be educated, it is rather convincing evidence that Robert Charles Frederic was the brother of George Frederic and directly succeeded him.

Finally, Bedford Pim and Berthold Seemann (1869:293), who visited the coast later, reproduced a document written by Robert Charles Frederic in 1837, in which he twice refers to George Frederic Augustus as his late brother.

This second view of the line of succession following the death of George Frederic Augustus is further substantiated by the fact that E.G. Squier's date for the coronation of Robert Charles Frederic is incorrect.<sup>10</sup> According to Squier ("Bard" 1965: 346-47), George Frederic was killed in 1824 and Robert Charles Frederic was finally crowned on 23 April 1825. Squier needed the interregnum year to make room for his line of puppet kings. According to documents in the archives of Belize, the coronation occurred in April of 1824, not 1825, only one month after George Frederic's death (Burdon 1934:27). Although the succession now passed from brother to brother, or possibly from half-brother to half-brother, the new king was still a direct descendant of George I.

#### *Robert Charles Frederic (1824-1842)*

It was during the reign of Robert Charles Frederic that the English again began to exert more influence on the Miskito Shore. The direction of influence once more came from Belize. However, the British government refused to make the Miskito Shore an English colony, in spite of pressure from the Belizeans (Naylor 1960:369).

Like his older brother, George Frederic, Robert Charles Frederic was crowned at Belize.<sup>11</sup> The Belize government spent £1000 on entertainment and presents (Burdon 1934:27).

Young (1971:25) gave the following eye-witness description of Robert Charles Frederic:

The king looked remarkably well, he was dressed in the uniform of a post captain in the British navy, and his deportment was very quiet and reserved, although he seemed amused when any favourite subject was started; altogether he made a most favorable impression.

Robert Charles Frederic, like previous Miskito kings, had more than one wife. However, the wife known as Juliana was called queen and only the children that she produced were considered part of the royal line: Prince George, Prince William Clarence, Prince Alexander, Princess Agnes, and Princess Victoria (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:794). At least one other wife produced a daughter, named Matilda, who was not considered, at that time, to be part of the royal line (Bell 1899:300).

While the three major subdivisions of the kingdom were maintained, only one of the subleaders seems to have been important—the general, Lowry Robinson, son of General Lowrie Robinson. General Robinson's brother, Barras, succeeded Robinson as general after Robinson underwent unsuccessful surgery at Belize (Roberts 1967:267-68). Lowry Robinson apparently succeeded Barras, and was general by at least 1831 (Burdon 1934:302). Lowry Robinson was educated at Belize (Macgregor 1847:54). Some writers have confused Lowry Robinson, also known as Thomas Lowry Robinson, with his father, thinking there was only a single General Robinson. Mueller (1932:59-60), for example, claimed that General Robinson lived to be a hundred years old. No mention has been discovered of the name of either admiral or governor during the reign of Robert Charles Frederic, although George Hodgson is mentioned as governor in 1848 (Rodríguez 1964:291). However, it has not been determined whether he held the position during the reign of Robert Charles Frederic. It is possible that Colonel Johnson, named as regent in 1843 along with Robinson and Wellington, was governor and that Prince Wellington was admiral.

During the reign of Robert Charles Frederic, the king had at least two residences. One was at Waslá, about seven days travel up the Wank River from Cape Gracias a Dios (Young 1971:25). The other and perhaps the more important residence, was at Pearl Key Lagoon (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:688).

Under Robert Charles Frederic, a number of laws were passed regulating behavior and creating taxes. In 1832 King Frederic outlawed wife and daughter beating under the penalty of death, he forbid taking any more Indians as slaves, and he imposed an annual tax of one dollar on every free male subject above the age of fourteen (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:688-89).

Robert Charles Frederic attempted to extend the borders of the Miskito Kingdom south from Bluefields all the way to Boca del Toro in what is now Panama. This was an area where the Miskito had previously turtle-fished and slave-raided. On 26 October 1832, he appointed William Hodgson as "captain and magistrate of the Terabee and Valiente Indians, and collector of taxes from Manchioneal Bay, Monkey Point, Boca del Toro, and other places adjacent" (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:687).

By 1836 the banks of the principal rivers within Belize were almost completely cleared of mahogany. Yet the next ten years were a boom era for mahogany as the demand for this wood rapidly expanded in England as a result of railway construction and its growing popularity with English cabinet makers (Naylor 1967:43, 63). The English of Belize began to look to the untouched mahogany stands of the

Miskito Shore and began to exert the greatest British influence on the coast since the superintendency. Both Francisco Morazán, president of the Central American Federation, and Robert Charles Frederic began awarding grants—often for the same tracts of land. The most desired tracts were along the Román River east of Trujillo.

Colonel Alexander Macdonald became superintendent of Belize at the beginning of January 1837 and almost immediately began to exert his personal influence over the Miskito Shore.<sup>12</sup> Macdonald sent archival material to England to demonstrate the long-term links between the Miskito and the British (Manning 1933:161-62). Macdonald encouraged Robert Charles Frederic to request the protection of Great Britain against possible Central American aggression; Robert Charles Frederic wrote to the king of England on 25 January 1837 (Rodríguez 1964:128).

In 1839 Robert Charles Frederic wrote to the comptroller of the port of Moín, Costa Rica, notifying him that the port belonged to the Miskito Kingdom and that the Costa Ricans had no right to collect duties (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:668-69). This claim was apparently based on Macdonald's perception that the cacao seized in raids on Costa Rican plantations during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was in fact annual tribute paid to the Miskito (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:691-92).

By February 1840, Macdonald had convinced King Robert Charles Frederic to appoint a special commission to govern his domains. Macdonald was appointed the king's chief advisor, and other Belizean officials made up the rest of the commission. However, in September of the same year, the Colonial Office disapproved the commission (Burdon 1934:410).

On 5 January 1841, Macdonald wrote to the Costa Ricans informing them that Salt Creek and the port of Moín were within the territory of the Miskito, "an ally of the British nation," and that any attempt to take possession on the part of Costa Rica "will not be permitted by the British Government" (Burdon 1935:49).

By 1842 Macdonald was already grooming Robert Charles Frederic's youngest son Clarence to take over as king. In a letter from W.S. Murphy, special agent of the United States to Central America, to Secretary of State Daniel Webster, dated 20 January 1842, Murphy described meeting Clarence while visiting Macdonald in Belize (Manning 1933:163):

His Excellency shewed me, at the same time, a little native Musquito Boy, about 8 or 10 years of age, *whom he said was* the Son of the "Present King" of the Musquito Kingdom, and Heir to the Throne. That although the King, his father, was not old, yet he was very intemperate, and could not live long, and that at his death, this Boy, would ascent the Throne of that Kingdom. He said, he had the Boy under his care, and was to send him to England to be Educated.

Macdonald's next move was to organize an expedition to establish a British protectorate on the Miskito Shore. He left Belize on 20 July 1841 on the British sloop-of-war *Tweed*, picked the king up at Gracias a Dios, and then sailed to Bluefields. At Bluefields Macdonald had the king sign a new document that established the same advisory commission that England had disallowed, but which, this time, was not conditional upon the approval of the British government. Macdonald also convinced the king to change the successor to the throne from his eldest son, George, to his youngest son, Clarence, with the second advisory commission serving as regent until the boy was old enough to rule. By choosing the youngest son as

successor, Macdonald and the others on the advisory commission would have been able to control the politics of the Miskito Kingdom for a longer period of time. The king then freed the slaves at Bluefields. The owners were to be compensated by revenues from the port of San Juan, once it was taken from the Nicaraguans. On 12 August 1841, the *Tweed* entered the port of San Juan, captured the Nicaraguan commandant, Manuel Quijano, raised the Miskito flag, and claimed the port for the Miskito king.<sup>13</sup> Later they sailed south to Boca del Toro and armed whatever Indians would acknowledge allegiance to the Miskito king. They then visited Great Corn Island to demonstrate the Miskito claim over it and finally returned to Cape Gracias a Dios, where King Frederic disembarked (Rodríguez 1964:239-44). E.G. Squier ("Bard" 1965:349) presented a completely false account of this trip:

a vessel of war was sent to the coast to catch "Robert Charles Frederick," and take him to Belize, where he would be unable to do more mischief [a reference to the grants of land he had made]. This was done, but "His Majesty" could not endure the restraints of civilization—he pined away, and died.

Robert Charles Frederic was not "captured" by Macdonald, nor was he taken to Belize as prisoner. There is also no evidence that Robert Charles Frederic died in Belize. However, E.G. Squier's account is certainly consistent with the picture he continually promoted of the Miskito kings as British puppets. Unfortunately, Squier's account of Robert Charles Frederic's "capture" and "imprisonment" was accepted as true by later writers, such as Ira Travis (1899:31).

As Macdonald had anticipated, Robert Charles Frederic died shortly after the trip. According to C. Napier Bell (1899:14) and Stout (1859:175), he died in 1841. Others put the death in 1842 (Luke 1950:64). It seems likely that he died of alcoholism.

The date of 1842 is probably correct, as Juan Francisco Irias visited the king in 1842, and the individual he refers to as king was obviously an adult. He described him as follows (1853:165-66):

The Chief, or "King," who at this time governed these savages, was a man of small stature, thin, with an aquiline nose, dark color, descended from *Gicaque* and *Mosco* ancestors, and had some education. His residence was generally upon the banks of the river. He was hospitable to the voyagers, inviting them to his hut, and feasting them to the best of his ability while they remained with him. He also insisted on all who were fond of *aguardiente* (rum) to drink until they could not move, on pain of being regarded as wanting in consideration to him.

The stereotype of the Miskito kings, at least as portrayed by American writers, as drunks who signed away vast stretches of land to private individuals while intoxicated, and were puppets of the British, seems to have been based mainly on the figure of Robert Charles Frederic.

### *The Problem of "George William Clarence"*

There is considerable misunderstanding about the kingship following the death of Robert Charles Frederic. First, none of his sons were old enough to rule, and the British controlled the Miskito Kingdom through the regency and council originally established by Robert Charles Frederic in his will of 26 February 1840 (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:794-95). According to most English sources, Robert Charles Frederic was pressured into writing this will and establishing a British-controlled regency by Superintendent Macdonald. In any case, Macdonald was named regent

during the minority of the children. The eldest son of Robert Charles Frederic, George Augustus Frederic, was finally old enough to assume the kingship in 1845.

Unfortunately, this fairly simple line of succession, Robert Charles to George Augustus, is obfuscated by the appearance in some of the American writings of the era of another "king," George William Clarence (Squier 1850:237, 1852:87; "Bard" 1965:57). This discrepancy can once again be attributed to E.G. Squier's writing. Because of other information contained in Squier's work, it seems likely that he had access to a copy of Robert Charles Frederic's will, which was laid before Parliament in 1848 as part of a collection of documents entitled "Correspondence Respecting the Mosquito Territory." United States government officials certainly had access to this correspondence, because much of it was debated in Congress. The will states in part (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:794): "And I do hereby constitute the said Colonel Macdonald and the said Commissioners guardians to my children, the Princes George, William Clarence, and Alexander, and the Princesses Agnes and Victoria." Apparently the careless Squier left out the comma between the two sons, George and William Clarence, and created the new individual "George William Clarence." Squier should have had the correct name because on 1 May 1849 John M. Clayton, secretary of state, wrote to him in Guatemala outlining the Miskito question and included a quote from John Macgregor's (1847) *Commercial Tariffs*, concerning the coronation of George Augustus Frederic (Manning 1933:48-49). Once Squier had made the mistake of referring to the successor of Robert Charles Frederic as George William Clarence, he continued to use the wrong name in all of his writing. Unfortunately, his mistake has been perpetuated and elaborated upon by later American and Nicaraguan writers (Stout 1859:174; Laird 1970:97; Gámez 1939:211). In an article on the Miskito kings published in the Managua newspaper *La Prensa*, a modern writer tried to resolve the problem of "George William Clarence" and George Augustus Frederic being king at the same time. He wrote that George William Clarence must have taken the name of George Augustus Frederic when he was crowned in Belize in 1845 (Bräutigam-Beer 1971, cited in Holm 1978:64).

### *The Regency (1842-1845)*

Superintendent Macdonald served as regent for only about a year before he was replaced as superintendent and returned to England. However, during this period he initiated a controversy over the boundaries of the Miskito Kingdom that was to continue until 1860, as he attempted to make the kingdom a protectorate of the British.

Macdonald had taken William Clarence under his charge because he believed William Clarence was the best potential king. According to Macgregor (1847:41), William Clarence (also referred to as Clarence) was "intellectually, and in regard to health, better adapted to succeed to the crown than Prince George." William Clarence had come under Macdonald's care in 1839, when he was taken to Belize at the age of six. In Belize William Clarence resided in the Government House for four years with the superintendent. The individual appointed as teacher of the Honduras Free School acted as his private tutor (Burdon 1935:58). Requests were made to England by Macdonald for funds to educate William Clarence in England, but the requests were refused, and it was suggested that William Clarence be educated either in Belize or Jamaica, to be paid for out of the funds that were annually allocated for presents



to the Miskito Indians (Burdon 1935:63). Macdonald then decided to send Clarence to England with his wife to be educated at Fulham (Burdon 1935:64, 75).

According to Charles Napier Bell (1899:14), the king's son, George Augustus Frederic, and three daughters were left in the care of James Stanislaus Bell, who was named sheriff and commandant of the kingdom. In 1843 presents were sent to Cape Gracias a Dios for the widow of Robert Charles Frederic and £100 were sent to Mr. Hodgson at Bluefields for the board and maintenance of Prince George and Princess Agnes (Burdon 1935:63).

On 4 May 1843, the colonial secretary wrote to the Miskito leaders Prince Wellington, Colonel Johnson, and General Lowry Robinson, that the regency of their country would be placed in their hands (Burdon 1935:64).

In June 1843, Macdonald was replaced as superintendent of Belize by Charles Fancourt. In September 1843, the governor of Jamaica wrote to Fancourt expressing the opinion that Her Majesty's government should not interfere with the free choice of the people in selecting a king from among the family members of Robert Charles Frederic (Burdon 1935:67). In 1844 Superintendent Fancourt wrote to England that it appeared that George would become the next king, rather than William Clarence (Burdon 1935:75), suggesting that the British had little control over the actual succession. Apparently primogeniture was to continue as the main mechanism of succession for the Miskito kings. George Augustus Frederic, the eldest son, was chosen heir and crowned at Belize in 1845, while William Clarence was in England. Prince William Clarence died in England in 1848, at the age of fifteen (Anonymous 1849a:ii).

In early 1844, Macdonald, now living in London, was instrumental in having Patrick Walker, who had served as his secretary in Belize, appointed to the post of "British resident on the Mosquito Shore," a position that was to be comparable to that of the superintendents during the last half of the eighteenth century (Rodríguez 1964:246).

By 1844 British interests in the Miskito Shore were beginning to shift from the logging potentials of the Honduran coast to the interoceanic potential of the San Juan River and the importance of the port of San Juan. As a result, Walker moved himself and the king's residence to Bluefields to be closer to the port of San Juan (Manning 1933:246). Although George Augustus Frederic was crowned in 1845, he was still a minor and continued to receive advice from Walker, who by 1848 was calling himself regent of the Miskito king, as well as consul general of Her Britannic Majesty on the Mosquito Coast (Manning 1933:269).

During the regency interim, General Lowry Robinson attempted to expand his own position by making treaties directly with the Hondurans in December 1843, without the approval of any British officials (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:683). John Macgregor (1847:54) noted that "the present General Robinson was devoted to the late king, but he has since been intriguing with the authorities of the state of Honduras."

Since Prince William Clarence was in England, and it was clear that the English were not especially impressed with Prince George, Lowry Robinson may have seen an opportunity to assume the position of king himself. By negotiating with Honduras, he may have attempted to demonstrate external recognition of his authority to the British. This possibility is perhaps somewhat substantiated by Macgregor's (1847:

54) description of Robinson as having "some treachery of disposition." If Robinson had in fact hoped to become king, he was unsuccessful, and once Walker moved the king's residence to Bluefields, there was a major shift in importance among general, admiral, and governor. Governor George Hodgson, who controlled the area of Bluefields and San Juan, became the most important of the three leaders. Robinson continued to control the north coast, and Prince Wellington controlled the area around Cape Gracias a Dios; apparently the individual controlling the central area of the kingdom was no longer referred to as the admiral. Wilson (1975:179) mentioned an Admiral Peter who was the leader of the Rama Indians in 1847. It seems unlikely that this individual controlled a major subdivision of the kingdom, but rather that he had one of the lesser offices that also used the title.

*George Augustus Frederic (1845-c.1864)*

George was the eldest son of Robert Charles Frederic and Queen Juliana. Pim (Pim and Seemann 1869:268) provided an eye-witness description of the king:

He was about five feet seven inches in height, well built, but slight, and of pure Indian blood. His complexion was swarthy—darker than that of a Spaniard, but still fairer than the generality of his countrymen, probably because he was not subjected to the life of constant exposure and hardship which is their common lot; his face was flat, like that of a Chinese, cheek-bones high and rather prominent, the nose small and thin,—a distinguishing feature of the Mosquitians, the other tribes on the coast not being characterized by this marked peculiarity, but, on the contrary, having noses similar to those of other Indians, nay, in some instances, even prominent. His hair was very black, cut rather short, and parted on one side; it was very fine, and straight, without the slightest appearance of a curl or even waviness. Having neither whiskers nor moustache, nor in fact the least vestige of a hair on his face, and with the delicately-shaped hand and foot of his race, he gave one the idea of being very young; he was not quite thirty, but looked scarcely twenty.

George Augustus Frederic had been educated in Jamaica and Pim (Pim and Seemann 1869:269) was amazed at his perfect English: "He said that he felt more like an Englishman than anything else, and in fact considered English his proper language, for he certainly could not speak Mosquitian so well."

In his room, George Augustus Frederic had a large library of English authors, including Shakespeare, Byron, and Sir Walter Scott, as well as the basic books on the Miskito Coast, such as Young's *Mosquito Shore*, Orlando Roberts, and works by E.G. Squier (Pim and Seemann 1869:270-71).

Another Englishman, John Collinson (1870:149), who visited the king in 1863, presented much the same favorable picture of him:

The last king, my companion for some time, while exploring the country, was a good specimen of what an enlightened Indian can become. His education, received at Jamaica, was quite equal to that of an ordinary English gentleman. With it he had acquired a refined taste, hardly to have been expected; he was never without one or two volumes of our best English poets in his pocket, and availed himself of every unoccupied moment to peruse them. But I do not want it to be supposed that civilization had made him effeminate in the slightest degree; on the contrary, he was the best shot, and canoe's man in the whole country; and though regarded by his people with the affection of children for their father, his slightest word or look was law, and woe to him who disobeyed either.

The American writers, influenced by Squier, described the king in derogatory terms. For example, in an anonymous pamphlet written in 1849, the Miskito king was described as "a little child who scarcely knows his right hand from his left" (Anonymous 1849b:3).

Bluefields had become a town composed mainly of whites and blacks. The only Indians there were the king and his retinue, about 100 individuals altogether. In 1848 Bluefields contained about 500 individuals, of which 50 were white; most of the rest were black. The previous year, Bluefields had had 111 whites and 488 blacks. Most of these whites (92) had been part of a Prussian colony known as Carlsruhe. By 1848 many of the Prussian colonists had either died or left; the colony was abandoned in 1849 (E.G. Squier 1858:661-62). Carlsruhe was one of several colonization projects contemplated by the Prussians (G.B. Henderson 1944).

George Augustus Frederic was crowned at Belize on 7 May 1845, and that coronation ceremony is the best described of any of the coronations of the Miskito kings. Harry Luke, while traveling in British Honduras, had the opportunity to read the only known remaining copy of the coronation service. The document was printed in red on handsome cartridge paper, with the rubrics set out in old face italics. The booklet was owned by a very elderly woman from Belize, who considered it an important heirloom. Fortunately, Luke realized the importance of the document and reprinted the complete service in his book *Caribbean Circuit* (1950).

George Augustus Frederic's was the last coronation of a Miskito king by the British; in fact, he was the last Miskito to hold the title of king. During George Augustus Frederic's reign, the organization of the Miskito Kingdom was drastically changed; the power of the Miskito was greatly reduced as the British eventually withdrew most of their support.

Between 1845, the coronation of the king, and 1850, the English economic interest in the Miskito coast shifted from logwood, which was no longer in demand, to a proposed interoceanic passage to be constructed somewhere in Central America by one of the major powers. The United States, England, and, to a lesser extent, France were interested in the passage. Many routes were proposed, but a route based on passage up the San Juan River to Lake Nicaragua and then through a short canal, which was to be constructed to the Pacific, was considered the most likely. The port of San Juan (del Norte) was the key to controlling passage along this route. United States policy was to support Nicaragua and to refuse to acknowledge the Miskito Kingdom and any of its claims on San Juan del Norte. The English, on the other hand, tried to control the port by supporting the Miskito and by claiming during this period that the Miskito Kingdom was an independent political entity, which they referred to as "Mosquitia."

A new Miskito political entity appeared under British supervision, the Council of the State of Mosquito. The leading figure was George Hodgson, the governor, who now held the title of "senior member." He was the grandson of Robert Hodgson, who had been British superintendent to the Miskito Coast but who had defected to the Spanish and in 1789 had been appointed colonel by the King of Spain (Squier 1850:199). Other members of this council included Alexander Hodgson, Halstead Ingram, James Porter, John Dixon, James Green, and the king (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:714). It has not been determined when the council was created, but Alexander Hodgson is mentioned as one of the magistrates of Bluefields as early as 1844 (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1862:689). The council sent a number of messages to the government of Nicaragua outlining the Miskito king's right to San Juan del Norte. According to Squier (1850:245), when George Hodgson was later taken prisoner, he supposedly claimed that the council never met, that his name had

been forged to documents, and that Patrick Walker had created an imaginary political body through which the British could control San Juan del Norte.

On 30 June 1847, the Foreign Office of Great Britain officially announced that the boundaries of the Miskito nation extended from Cape Honduras to San Juan del Norte. A British warship with George Hodgson on board arrived at San Juan del Norte on 25 October 1847 and informed the Nicaraguans that Miskito forces would occupy San Juan on 1 January 1848. A few weeks later, the Nicaraguans sent a mission to the Miskito Coast to encourage Princess Agnes Ana Frederic, the king's eldest sister, to state her disapproval of the proposed Miskito takeover of San Juan. This she did, and she recognized Nicaraguan sovereignty over the Miskito Coast (Rodríguez 1964:285-88).

The King's sister apparently had no influence over the British or the Miskito, however. On 1 January 1848, Patrick Walker, under the protection of a British warship, took possession of San Juan in the name of the Miskito king. The United States considered this action a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. The Nicaraguans fought to recapture the port, but without success.

In March 1849, Patrick Walker died. The English claimed that he had drowned accidentally; Squier (1850:248) claimed that Walker had been shot in the chest and his body horribly mangled by alligators. According to the king, Walker at the time of his death had begun to carry out many important projects for the Miskito and the tribes under their rule. The king felt the loss of Walker as a great tragedy (Pim and Seemann 1869:269-70). With Walker's death, Frederick Chatfield, the British consul to Central America, became more personally involved in the affairs at San Juan del Norte.

The British changed the name of the port from San Juan del Norte to Greytown.<sup>14</sup> In March 1850, Chatfield consolidated control over Greytown and hired former members of the West India Regiment, from Jamaica, to serve as a police force there. He also requested that a British warship be kept on permanent duty at Greytown. In order to pacify the king, Chatfield recommended to Lord Palmerston, the British foreign secretary, that George Augustus Frederic's "yearning for a white woman be satisfied" (Rodríguez 1964:318). The particular white women requested by the king was Miss Bell, sister of Charles Napier Bell, an important author on the Miskito. The king had been raised with the Bell children. The father of the children, James Stanislaus Bell, was the individual who had been appointed sheriff and commandant of the Miskito Kingdom by King Robert Charles Frederic in 1841 (Bell 1899:14). Lord Palmerston refused Chatfield's recommendation, suggesting that the decision be left to the woman.

In 1850 the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was signed between the United States and Great Britain. In signing the treaty, the United States assumed that the British would withdraw from the Miskito Coast, but they did not (Gray 1974:144). The English did not want to abandon Greytown for fear that the Nicaraguans would take control. During the 1850s, the United States and Great Britain attempted to resolve the problem of Greytown, at one time making it an independent political entity, as well as the problem of the Miskito Kingdom. The American William Walker and his filibusters attempted to gain control of Nicaragua between 1855 and 1857, adding further to the political turmoil.

By 1860 the British decided to leave Nicaragua and signed a treaty with that country, the Treaty of Managua, establishing a Miskito reservation that was to be considered an autonomous political entity within the boundaries of Nicaragua and changing the title of the Miskito king to that of chief. Article III of the treaty stated (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1867:98-99) that the Miskito Indians:

shall enjoy the right of governing, according to their own customs, and according to any regulations which may from time to time be adopted by them, not inconsistent with the sovereign rights of the Republic of Nicaragua, themselves, and all persons residing within such district. Subject to the above-mentioned reserve, the Republic of Nicaragua agrees to respect and not to interfere with such customs and regulations so established, or to be established, within the said district.

Most of the points of this treaty had been suggested by Lord Grey, the colonial secretary, as early as 6 March 1848. In fact the only difference between Grey's plan and the final treaty was the autonomy of the Miskito Reservation (Van Alstyne 1936:339-40).

Needless to say, the Miskito were disappointed with the British action. Without British support, the Miskito were no longer able to dominate the eastern coast. On the other hand, the Nicaraguans were not yet strong enough to claim the Miskito area, because of their own political instability. For almost thirty-five years a stalemate existed, and the Miskito society was able to function without much interference from the Nicaraguans.

On 12 September 1861, a convention was held in Bluefields to establish a constitution for the operation of the newly established Miskito Reservation. From this point on in Miskito history, the positions of king, general, admiral, and governor ceased to exist. Theoretically the political power was to be in the hands of the headmen. Altogether fifty-one headmen of "the Mosquitos and of the mixed population" attended the convention, including James Porter, John Dixon, William H. Ingram (presumably Halstead Ingram), and Alexander Hodgson, former members of the Council of the State of Mosquito. Included in the group of headmen were nineteen individuals from Bluefields, nine of whom had the family name of Hodgson. There was only one headman from Cape Gracias a Dios and only three from Sandy Bay, the traditional seats of Miskito political power. Only eleven of the fifty-one names appear to be Indian. No one from Greytown was present (Mosquito Reservation 1884:4-6). George Augustus Frederic's title became "hereditary chief of Mosquito."

Out of the fifty-one headmen who attended the convention, the chief appointed forty-three as the General Council. Of those, only three of the names appear to be Indian. All nine Hodgsons were appointed to the council. The General Council was given the power to create the constitution, laws, and regulations for the reservation, to elect and appoint its own officers, and to elect and appoint an Executive Council (Mosquito Reservation 1884:7). The General Council elected George Augustus Frederic as chief and president of the council, Henry Patterson, of Pearl Lagoon, vice-president, and John H. Hooker, of Bluefields, secretary. The General Council also passed a series of acts concerning the organization of the government and authorized fifteen hundred dollars to be paid to the hereditary chief each year, in quarterly payments.

During George Augustus Frederic's rule as king and then chief, a number of other changes were occurring on the Miskito Coast. One involved the ethnic composition



of the population. As Jamaica began freeing its slaves and as its economy declined, a number of Jamaican blacks and mulattoes began settling on the Miskito Coast. At the same time, many of the white English merchants and planters began to leave. Their positions began to be filled by white North Americans, who came to control the economy of the region.

Beginning in 1847, Moravians arrived from Saxony to investigate the possibilities of religious work among the Miskito (Mueller 1932:5). The first missionaries began arriving in Bluefields in 1849 (Brindeau 1922:36). The Moravians worked among the whites and blacks, as well as among the Indians. One of the first pupils at the Moravian Christian day school was George Augustus Frederic, together with his three sisters, Agnes, Matilda, and Victoria (Mueller 1932:64). By 1857 the church membership in Bluefields totalled 132, with 200 to 300 people attending services (Mueller 1932:67). The missionaries then began moving north to establish new missions, in order to have closer contact with the Indians. The Moravian church represented the dominant Christian religion on the Miskito Coast.

In addition during George Augustus Frederic's reign, the notion of a native kingship spread south into the Talamanca region of Costa Rica, where three Indian leaders were calling themselves king by 1862. By 1870 all three of these original kings had either died or had fled the region and Antonio Saldaña became the sole king of Talamanca. He ruled until his death in 1910 and is still referred to as the last king of Talamanca (Meléndez 1962:102-3).

Another important change that occurred during George Augustus Frederic's reign was a shift in Miskito self-identity from *zambo* to pure Indian. All of the early accounts portrayed the Miskito as a mixed Indian, black, and white population. Only the southern section of the Miskito Kingdom, the area under the governor, was said to be made up of pure Indians. The mixed population seems to have dominated politics and produced the line of Miskito kings. By the middle of the nineteenth century, as more and more blacks from the West Indies began arriving on the Miskito Coast, the Miskito came to consider themselves Indian, rather than *zambo*, and were considered Indian by others (Helms 1977). George Augustus Frederic and his sisters were now considered to be part of a pure Indian blood line. The new orientation of the society was that only a pure Indian could become the hereditary chief of the Miskito. The line of Miskito succession was explained to John Collinson (1870:149) in 1863 (perhaps by George Augustus Frederic) as follows: "The king of the entire territory is an hereditary chief, and is obliged by law to be a pure Mosquito, the title descending regularly from father to son, or in failure of direct issue to the nearest relative, who is a member of the royal tribe." George Augustus Frederic seems to have had an affinity for non-Indian women. His infatuation with the white woman, Miss Bell, has already been mentioned. He eventually married a black woman (Brindeau 1922:32), apparently late in his life, because when Pim visited the king in the early 1860s, George Augustus Frederic was still a bachelor (Pim and Seemann 1869:294).

The line of succession now passed to the son of George's second oldest sister. George's oldest sister, Agnes, had married an Englishman (Pim and Seemann 1869:294). George's second oldest sister, Victoria, had married a Miskito Indian, and their son, William Henry Clarence, was considered the legitimate heir to the throne. In describing William Henry Clarence in 1866, Wickham (1872:148) noted that "he



is the son of the late king of Moskito's sister, Princess Victoria, the king having married a woman of mixed race, a creole. It is the law of the land that none but those of pure Moskito descent shall succeed to the chieftainship."

Bell (1899:15) was apparently incorrect when he wrote that George Augustus Frederic died in 1862, leaving no children. Mueller (1932:60) wrote that George died in November 1867 and that "none of his sons was deemed suitable to become his successor as their mother was not of pure Indian stock." Neither date of his death may be correct, as Pim included in his book a copy of a certificate of the christening of the boat *Susana* on 16 May 1863, signed by George Augustus Frederic (Pim and Seemann 1869:468). Likewise, George Augustus Frederic passed an act in the council chamber for the protection of Indians, dated 24 October 1863. A copy of a letter dated 15 February 1867 mentioned that William Henry Clarence was already chief (Pim and Seemann 1869:453). Pablo Lévy (1873:400), a French engineer, may have been correct when he wrote that George Augustus Frederic died in 1864.

*William Henry Clarence (c.1866-1883)*

Beginning with William Henry Clarence, the Miskito line of succession was no longer able to pass from father to son. William Henry Clarence, George Augustus Frederic's sister's son, must have become chief about 1866. Henry Wickham (1872:148), passing through Bluefields in October 1866, met William Henry Clarence, who was described as chief, and George Augustus Frederic was referred to as the "late king." A letter to Pim (Pim and Seemann 1869:453), dated 15 February 1867, says that William Henry Clarence had already been legally elected, apparently by the Miskito council of headmen. Wickham (1872:148-49) described the young chief as "about ten years of age, and appeared very intelligent. He lived at the mission-house, and was, I believe, well grounded in his studies." The young chief stayed with the missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Lündberg. According to Mueller (1932:60), William Henry Clarence was educated in Jamaica and spent two years in the home of one of the Moravian missionaries, Brother Hoch, on Corn Island.

Although no representative from Greytown was present at the establishment of the Miskito Council, individuals from Greytown were still influencing the reservation. James Green, the British consul of Greytown during George Augustus Frederic's reign, was still consul and still very important. T.J. Martin, "chief justice of the Mosquito," also lived in Greytown and was the guardian and legal adviser of the chief (Pim and Seemann 1869:453).

The Nicaraguans saw the passing of authority to a ten-year-old as a sign of weakness in Miskito leadership and offered Martin money to use his influence to bring about the annexation of the reservation to Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan government refused to acknowledge the new chief and refused to pay to the chief the subsidy that had been agreed upon in the 1860 treaty (Pim and Seemann 1869:452-53).

William Henry Clarence was declared an adult in 1874 and took over control of the government (Brindeau 1922:32), or at least became a figurehead. By 1875 he was signing acts proposed by the Executive Council as chief and president. As late as 1877, he continued to have a guardian, Henry Patterson, who was also still vice-president of the council (Mosquito Reservation 1884:23-26).

According to the treaty of 1860, Nicaragua was supposed to pay the Miskito five thousand dollars each year for the first ten years following the signing of the treaty. It did not. In 1877, as friction between the Miskito and Nicaraguans intensified, the Miskito finally protested. The matter was turned over to the Emperor Francis Joseph, of Austria, for arbitration. His decision, in 1881, backed the Miskito claims and stressed the limited nature of Nicaragua's sovereignty over the Miskito (Laird 1970:43).

The life of William Henry Clarence was cut short at about the age of twenty-three. He became the victim of a revolutionary plot and died of poisoning in May 1879 (Mueller 1932:60). The last three chiefs of the Miskito now followed in rapid succession: George William Albert Hendy, Jonathan Charles Frederic, and Robert Henry Clarence. While these chiefs did not follow the father-son pattern of succession, they were all related.

#### *George William Albert Hendy (1884-1888)*

Brindeau (1922:32) stated that Hendy was the cousin of George Augustus Frederic and Princess Victoria. However, with only that information it is impossible to specify the particular kinship links between George Augustus Frederic and Hendy. The only known uncle of George Augustus Frederic was George Frederic, the older brother of George Augustus Frederic's father. However, George Frederic died in 1824, which means that in 1884, when Hendy started acting in his official capacity, he would have to have been at least sixty if he was George Frederic's son.

Hendy had been a pupil of the missionary L undberg and was baptized the same day that he took the oath of office as chief (Brindeau 1922:32). The actual date on which Hendy assumed the office is unclear. There seems to have been a period of about five years following William Henry Clarence's death during which the laws of the reservation were made by the council, with Vice-President Charles Patterson in charge. The first laws signed by Hendy appeared in 1884 and continued until 1888. According to Brindeau (1922:32), Hendy was an intelligent and good-willed leader, but he succumbed to alcoholism and died in 1888. Also in 1888, the British began complaining to the Nicaraguan government that they were violating the 1860 treaty by infringing on the boundaries of the reservation and by establishing a post office at Bluefields (Williams 1916:289-90).

According to Laird (1970:97), Hendy's brother, Andres Hendy, was to succeed him, but he abdicated the throne. Jonathan Charles Frederic became the next chief. Others (Brindeau 1922:32; Mueller 1932:60) suggested that the succession passed directly from George William Albert Hendy to Jonathan Charles Frederic.

#### *Jonathan Charles Frederic (1889-1890)*

Jonathan Charles Frederic was the son of Matilda, George Augustus Frederic's half-sister. Robert Charles Frederic was the father of both Matilda and George, but George's mother was Queen Juliana; Matilda had a different mother. Thus, at this point the royal line passed to the offspring of a secondary wife of a king.

The first laws enacted by Jonathan Charles Frederic as chief and president were signed in March 1889. On 17 September 1889, he assembled another public convention of the headmen of the Mosquito and the mixed population. This meeting, like the one in 1861, was held in Bluefields. It was attended by ninety-one headmen, including Frank Thomas, representing New Orleans. On this occasion, more

Indian towns were represented, but the largest number of headmen were again from Bluefields—thirty-four individuals. The headmen elected a new General Council of forty-three members. This time twenty-six were from native villages. However, Charles Patterson was once again elected vice-president of the council, and J.W. Cuthbert, Jr., was elected secretary (Mosquito Reservation 1892:58-63). Both men were from Pearl Lagoon. Charles Patterson was part white, and Cuthbert was a Jamaican black (Keely 1894:166). Jonathan Charles Frederic remained chief until the spring of 1890, when he died of an accident caused by his excessive drinking (Brindeau 1922:32).

*Robert Henry Clarence (1891-1894)*

Following Jonathan Charles Frederic's death, the decision making was once again in the hands of Charles Patterson, the vice-president. He began signing laws on 8 July 1890 and continued until 24 March 1891, when Robert Henry Clarence signed his first set of laws as chief (Mosquito Reservation 1892:101-13).<sup>15</sup> Charles Patterson held the title of vice-president and guardian, because Robert Henry Clarence was only about nineteen years old when he came to power.

With Robert Henry Clarence, the line of succession returned to Princess Victoria's line. Robert Henry was the younger son of Victoria and the brother of William Henry Clarence (Brindeau 1922:32). Robert Keely (1894:166) presented the following description of Robert Henry: "The present chief, his Excellency Robert Henry Clarence, who as above stated, is a full-blooded Mosquito Indian, is a handsome, intelligent, and well-educated young man of twenty or thereabouts, with a magnificent head of glossy black hair."

The government, under Robert Henry Clarence, followed the same basic organization that had been established by the Miskito Reservation Constitution of 1861. The chief was elected by the General Council of headmen. The General Council continued to appoint the members of the Executive Council (De Kalb 1893:274). The reservation government was essentially tripartite in organization. The chief formed the executive branch, the General Council and the Executive Council formed the legislative branch, and a series of four courts formed the judicial branch. The Supreme Court was the highest of the four levels, and it had jurisdiction over all cases involving large amounts of money or heavy penalties, as well as control over educational matters (De Kalb 1893:272-73).

The Executive Council was composed of Robert Henry Clarence, chief; George Patterson, vice-president and guardian; J.W. Cuthbert, attorney general and secretary to the chief; J.W. Cuthbert, Jr., government secretary; George Haymond and Edward McCrea, councilmen and headmen (Keely 1894:165). From a photograph taken of the Executive Council, published both in Keely (1894) and De Kalb (1893), it is clear that the Cuthberts were black, and according to Keely (1894:166), their ancestors were from Jamaica. Keely said that the council members were nearly all descendants of Jamaican blacks, with only Patterson having some white admixture. However, from the photograph it appears that Edward McCrea was probably Indian. De Kalb (1893:264, 275) stressed the friction that had developed between the Miskito and the blacks. Both had the right to vote, but the blacks were more interested in participating in politics and, as a result, came to control the reservation political offices.

The estimated population of the Miskito Reservation in 1892 was 7,500, of which 4,000 were Miskito and 3,500 were blacks, mainly from Jamaica, and whites (De Kalb 1893:263-64). Of the whites, 100 were Americans (*New York Daily Tribune* 1894a:2). The blacks and whites resided in the larger towns, and the Indians populated the small settlements. The Moravian church was considered the state church of the reservation, since its missions and schools received financial aid from the treasury (*New York Daily Tribune* 1894b:6).

Bluefields was still the capital of the reservation and the largest and most important city (population 3,500 to 4,000), but the chief's residence was at Pearl City, on Pearl Lagoon, about thirty miles north of Bluefields (De Kalb 1893:257). Bluefields had become a North American city. The houses were built of lumber brought from the United States, and the architecture was North American. Most of the houses were laid out along the one street in the city, King Street. An American paper, the *Bluefield Sentinel*, was published weekly, in English (Keely 1894:164-65).

The primary reason for Bluefields's prosperity was the growth of the banana industry. Hundreds of banana plantations sprang up around it, mainly on the Bluefields River. The banana industry began in 1883; by 1891, banana exports totalled about \$231,000. Gold mining was also important; in 1891, exports totalled \$85,000 (De Kalb 1893:260). By 1893 Bluefields was shipping more bananas than any two other ports in the world combined (Keely 1894:165). In that same year, the trade of the Miskito Coast with the United States amounted to almost \$4,000,000 (Morrow 1930:4).

The population of the reservation in 1894 was estimated to have reached 15,000 persons (Nelson 1894:1219). However, it is unlikely that the population had actually doubled in two years. Probably De Kalb's 1892 estimate was low and Nelson's 1894 estimate was high. In any case, the reservation was undergoing rapid growth as a result of heavy capital investment by the North Americans and, to a lesser extent, by the British. The estimated North American investment in the reservation in 1893 was \$10,000,000. Not only were Americans involved in the banana industry and gold mining, they were cutting mahogany, introducing steamers and tugs on the Bluefields River, and they owned many large and valuable buildings and warehouses (Nelson 1894:1219).

With all of this wealth sitting on their doorstep, the financially depressed Nicaraguans apparently could no longer ignore the coast. In December 1893, Nicaraguan troops were sent to the reservation to repel an imaginary Honduran invasion. The Miskito, under terms of the 1860 treaty, were no longer able to maintain an army, but only a limited police force.

On 12 February 1894, the Nicaraguans with 300 soldiers forcibly took possession of Bluefields, while the inhabitants of the town were asleep. The soldiers seized the government buildings and the archives of the Miskito Reservation; opened the prison to release the prisoners, including two murderers; and raised the Nicaraguan flag (Nelson 1894:1219). The Nicaraguan commissioner, General Carlos Lacayo, gave as his excuse for attacking Bluefields that the Miskito were being misgoverned by Jamaican blacks (*The Times* 1894:3).

Chief Robert Henry Clarence and his government were declared rebels. The chief, who was then twenty-one years of age, sought asylum at the house of Edwin Hatch, the acting British consul. American and British citizens were forcibly taken

from their houses, carried to Managua, and then expelled from the country. The population of Bluefields was quickly reduced to 500 individuals (Nelson 1894:1219).<sup>16</sup>

Chief Clarence was rescued by the British and carried on board a British man-of-war, along with 200 refugees, to Puerto Limón, Costa Rica, and then to Jamaica, where he was given asylum by the British and a pension for life of £4 18s a day (Nelson 1894:1219).

The Miskito Reservation ceased to exist, and the territory became a part of Nicaragua for the first time, although this annexation of the Miskito Coast is referred to by the Nicaraguans as "reincorporation." After 1894 the Miskito Coast was considered a department of Nicaragua and was named Zelaya after the Nicaraguan president who had organized the reincorporation. Since 1895 the Miskito have been considered Nicaraguans. In a treaty signed by Nicaragua and Great Britain in 1905, in which Great Britain agreed to recognize the absolute sovereignty of Nicaragua over the territory of the former Miskito reserve, Nicaragua agreed to: (a) exempt all Miskito and Creoles born before 1894 from military service and taxation for fifty years; (b) allow the Indians to live in their villages and follow their own customs, as long as they did not violate the laws of the country; (c) legalize their rights to property acquired before 1894; (d) reserve public pasture land for each Indian village; and (e) reimburse Indians who lost land with the equivalent in public land. In addition, the Miskito Indians and other inhabitants of the former reserve were given the same rights as other Nicaraguan citizens. The Nicaraguans also agreed that ex-Chief Robert Henry Clarence would be permitted to reside in Nicaragua, as long as he did not transgress the laws of Nicaragua and did not incite the Indians against Nicaragua (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1909:70-71).

Robert Henry Clarence never returned to the Miskito Coast. He died in the Public General Hospital of Kingston, following an operation, in January 1908, at the age of thirty-five (Luke 1950:77).

Although the office of king, or chief, no longer existed, the Miskito continued to recognize a royal line. In 1928 Robert Frederic, then seventy-three years old, was described as the last descendant of the Miskito kings. He lived at Aubrayeri, on the Honduran side of the Wanks River, across from Asang. He possessed the scepter of the Miskito kings, a short ebony staff with a small silver crown, given to his ancestors by the king of England. He eventually gave the scepter to one of the Moravian missionaries (Mueller 1932:134). It is possible that Robert Frederic was a brother of Johnathan Charles Frederic.

In 1977 John Holm, a linguist, found that an heir apparent to the Miskito throne was still known. The individual was Norton Cuthbert Clarence, a part-time grocer and pool-hall proprietor in Pearl Lagoon (Holm 1977:12).

The kings are further remembered today through a play written in the early twentieth century, by a missionary named Danneberger, to commemorate their passing. This play was to be presented every New Years Day, when the kings would return for a day. The play continues to be performed today in some of the Miskito villages, although it has been modified by the Miskito to reflect some of the key symbols of their society. The present-day play centers around dual kings, one from each of a village's moieties, who compete with one another during the celebrations. The king play is only one aspect of the Miskito people's continued interest in kings.



They avidly read about the Old Testament kings in the Miskito translations of Bible stories, and their *kisi* (fables) often center around kings and their activities (Dennis 1982:395).

### CONCLUSIONS

This discussion of the Miskito kings has shown considerable continuity in their line of succession. In most of the cases, the succession passed from father to son, usually to the eldest son of the principal wife. In a few cases, the line passed from older brother to younger brother. It was only during the era of the Miskito Reservation, *after* the English had left Nicaragua, that the traditional rules of succession could no longer be followed, as a number of chiefs died in office in short succession, apparently before producing sons.

Another pattern that emerges from this analysis is that all kings for whom there are data concerning their death, remained in office until their death. There is no evidence that the English removed any Miskito king from office. Stephen was the only person to step down from office, and he was never considered a true king, but rather a regent.

It has been demonstrated that all of the kings from 1655 to 1894 were relatives. This means that for at least 239 years, one family group controlled Miskito politics. This continuity is remarkable, given the stereotype of Miskito kings as puppets of the English.

### NOTES

1. A shorter version of this article was presented at the annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory, October 1982, Nashville, Tennessee. The research for this article was funded, in part, by the National Endowment for the Humanities, Summer Stipend No. FT-22517. I wish to thank Philip A. Dennis for pointing out that the Miskito term for brother is also extended to parallel cousins.

*Miskito* has many different spellings in the literature. Throughout most of their history, the name was spelled *Mosquito*. However, in the last century *Miskito* has become the accepted spelling in the anthropological literature. The latter form is used here, except in quotations.

2. In this treaty both the United States and Great Britain agreed that neither would seek or keep exclusive control over any interoceanic canals to be built; nor would either seek dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Miskito Coast, or any other part of Central America (Gray 1974: 144).

3. His dates are incorrect for the period of British influence. The last coronation of a

Miskito king in Belize was in 1845.

4. Also spelled Cape Gracias de Dios in the early English documents.

5. Lady Nugent (1907:54), wife of the Jamaican lieutenant governor, wrote in her diary on 1 November 1801 that a message had been received from the Miskito Coast informing them that George II had been assassinated "and King Stephen proclaimed as Regent."

6. Also spelled Frederick.

7. Also spelled Frederick. Macgregor (1847: 39) and a few other sources suggest that he was the half-brother of George Frederic.

8. Some accounts suggest that Isaac was George II's brother, rather than George I's brother.

9. An account of the disaster by one of the survivors is found in Douglas (1869).

10. The source of Squier's error might have been Dunn (1828), also cited by Crowe (1850: 209), who incorrectly gave 23 April 1825 as the date.

11. Henry Dunn (1828:25-27) provides the only account of the coronation, a description given to him by an unidentified friend.

12. Also spelled McDonald.



13. The only drawing of the Miskito flag thus far discovered appears on the cover of *Mosquito, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica* (Anonymous 1849a). It was purposely designed to show similarity to the British naval flag.

14. The port had also been known as San Juan de Nicaragua (Froebel 1859:13).

15. He is sometimes referred to as Henry Clarence.

16. Depositions collected by the Nicaraguans give a different version of what happened, presenting the Nicaraguans in the role of liberators (Nicaragua 1895).

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